

An end to innocence

Nicholas Tucker

REINHARD KUHN

Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature
264pp. University of New England Press, £16.
0 87451 235 2

Anyone who attempts to cover such large topic within one book faces enormous difficulties, since all fiction, whether it specifically mentions childhood or not, reveals attitudes to the young. In *The Awkward Age*, Mrs Brook's two younger children are barely mentioned and never actually encountered, even though they are also living at home during the progress of the entire story. Yet their very invisibility is as telling as some of James's explicit comments about children in other novels. Studies that only focus on main child characters also neglect important minor ones. But an author's attitude towards these is often more informative than the hallowed treatment reserved for the great literary set-pieces of childhood, such as the stories of Paul Dombey, Little Nell or Oliver Twist.

His own wide scholarship and FRESS (File Retrieval and Editing System) - especially acknowledged in the author's preface - have enabled Reinhard Kuhn to select what he regards as the most significant books and poetry dealing with childhood over the last 2,000 years, excluding books written especially for children. Kuhn traces four main themes concerning childhood. First, the "Enigmatic Child", who lives within a self-enclosed, non-referential universe: wise beyond their years, such characters all have a definite message to deliver to the adults around them, yet

are doomed to be misunderstood or ignored, usually until it is too late. These children can either be redemptive, as in *Silas Marner*, or menacing, as in *Jude the Obscure*. Second, the many depictions of childhood as symbolic of either Heaven or Hell, with children themselves often shuttling between the two during the same novel: sometimes they take their revenge on their tormentors; elsewhere, they turn against those adults determined to create an artificial paradise for them. In either case, according to Kuhn, the child resents the efforts of adults to shape his world. This is questionable - birthday surprises, treats and other evidence of positive parental planning are often rapturously described in fiction - and to go on to state that "it seems to matter little" whether this external shaping is at the hands of benign or malignant adults is plainly absurd (especially in view of the stomach-turning passages quoted elsewhere in the book about various barbarities practised on children both in fiction and in life).

Third, Kuhn turns to the theme which forms the title of his book; corruption in paradise. This section deals with the way that literary childhoods are so often destroyed by a revelation of sex or death, which brings an end to childish innocence. "Because Thanatos and Eros have no place in the cosmogony of children and because these two gods cannot be expelled, Eden must be destroyed." Books considered here include *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Turn of the Screw*, although not *The Go-Between*, which unites both themes in its final chapters. Lastly, there is a separate discussion on the death of the child, used variously in fiction as a way of making a social protest (*Les Misérables*), a form of metaphysical revolt (*The Brothers Karamazov*), or as a comment on the

ever-precarious nature of childhood (*Dr Faustus*). A fifth theme, sub-titled "Voci Puelli: a resonance of modern poetry", is also put forward but fails to cohere. Had Kuhn lived to see his book cohere, had publication, it is possible that this section would either have been strengthened or scrapped.

In fact, much of *Corruption in Paradise* stands as a noble epitaph to a fine scholar. The breadth of its argument is a welcome change from the usual plundering of Blake, Wordsworth and Dickens whenever this topic is discussed. At the same time, the less familiar mid-European sources cited, such as some harsh, cynical picaresque novels from sixteenth-century Spain and seventeenth-century Germany, are a reminder of how more protected were the childhoods of generations of Britons. For whatever the privations of cold, hunger and over-work of British children, their sufferings bear little comparison with the horrors visited on children as a result of catastrophes like the Thirty Years War, or the sadistic traffic in child beggars described by Victor Hugo.

On the other hand, the breadth of Kuhn's researches also represents a danger to this study. So many sources, yoked together over different times and cultures, make for generalizations that are sometimes superficial rather than profound, given that literary sources are related to each other rather than to the divergent societies that produced them. Considering many different works of prose and poetry also entails a great deal of plot summary: never an easy thing to do gracefully, and made more dubious here by some important mistakes in detail. A larger question, though, is posed by the very nature of the whole book. A mere regurgitation of different literary childhoods is not really enough to justify any study, but the

author has also achieved something more durable. The four main themes which he puts forward are indeed statements about childhood that have an extra significant, perhaps archetypal meaning in the human imagination, and the case for seeing them in this way is convincingly argued. A qualification would be that other persistent images of childhood also exist in literature, such as the child as truth-teller (the Alice stories and *The Emperor's New Clothes*), the child as moralist (Huckleberry Finn or Mrs Inebald's *Nature and Art*) and the child as alien rather than enigmatic, as in a number of twentieth-century novels. Mentioning other competing images of childhood does not devalue those discussed and illustrated here; it does, however, make them seem rather less central in their importance.

At times, Kuhn makes larger claims for his study in another direction, hoping that it will illuminate not just fictional children but real ones as well, leading to moments when the reader is not quite certain which is being referred to. This is a serious ambiguity, since whatever their similarities, flesh-and-blood children often have little in common with their fictional counterparts. In fiction, childhood is frequently depicted as an existence where children spend much time in the company of adults, behaving according to largely adult thoughts, emotions and predilections. This picture is both comprehensible and appealing to grown-up readers, who themselves usually find it easiest to recall those moments of their own childhood closest to the adult way in which they now think and feel. Aspects of childhood that do not lend themselves so readily to mature memory, such as fragmentary, time-bound thinking, discontinuous logic, free-floating anxiety, fantasy games or extended, desultory conversations with other

children, are normally absent from adult novels about childhood except in rare cases, such as *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Joyce Cary's underrated *Charley is my Darling*.

Kuhn clearly recognizes some of these shortcomings in fictional descriptions of children, yet at other times still prefers them to alternative explanations. Because novelists find it more dramatically satisfying to suggest a state of innocence duly to be shattered by knowledge of the sexual act, he argues that there must be some truth in this idea, despite evidence not just from Freud but from the conversations, jokes and songs in any school playground. Some children, it is true, were once obviously more sheltered than they are now in these matters, but the author does attempt to describe twentieth-century childhood too, and here he often appears out of both depth and date. As it is, the image of the enigmatic child today has largely been taken over by science fiction, with ET the latest in a long line of puzzled visitors from elsewhere. The shock of discovering sexuality is not so much concerned with the act itself, but with whom it is being performed outside the family, while the Hell of childhood is more often due to terrors caused by other children than by adults themselves, as in William Trevor's *The Children of Dymouth*.

But if the history of twentieth-century childhood in literature has still to be written, there is much in *Corruption in Paradise* that is usefully informative about previous ways of writing. As such, it deserves to take its place alongside Peter Coveney's *The Image of Childhood* as one of the few books that honourably attempt to equate evocative childhood literary descriptions with the experience of childhood itself, while still remaining sensitive to the essential mysteries of both.

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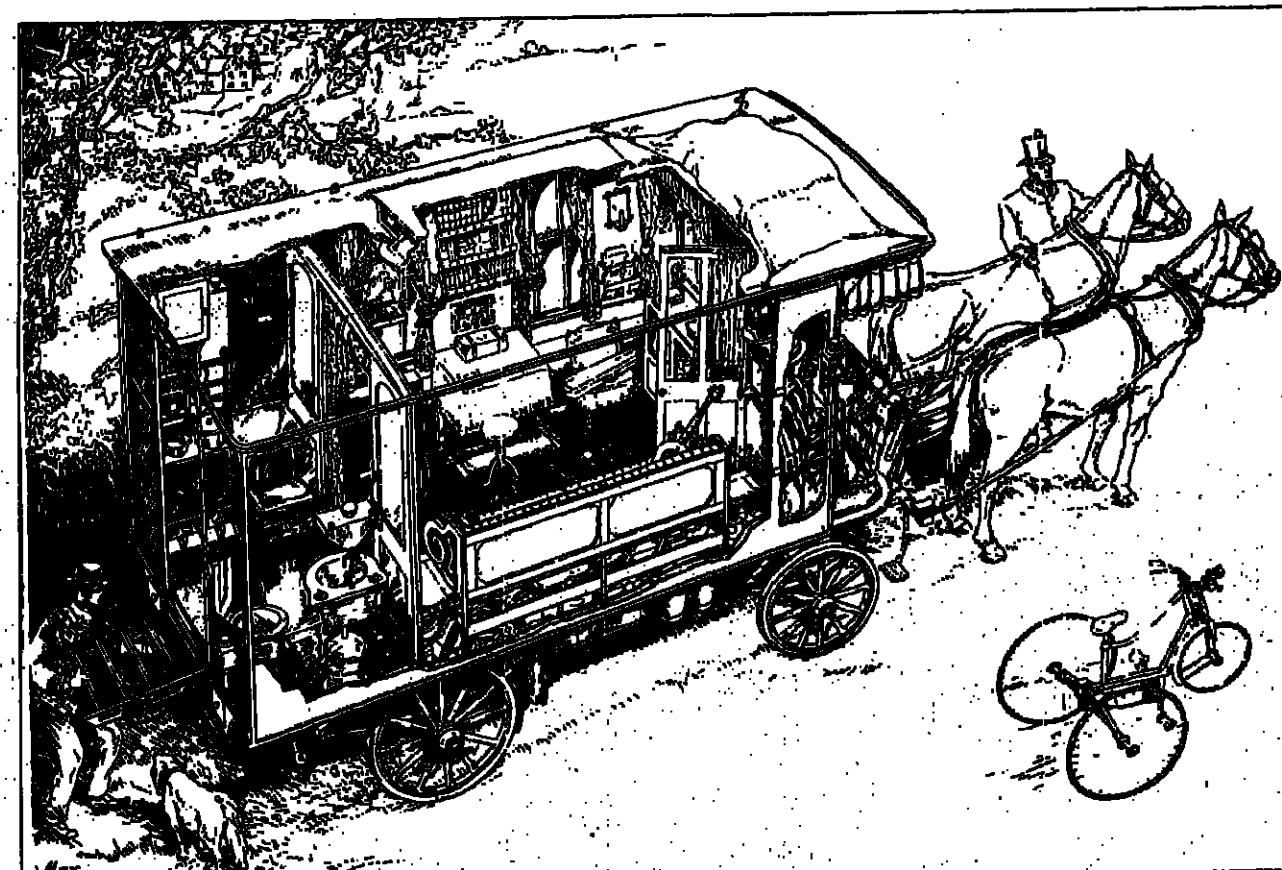
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An aristocrat among scholars

E. J. Kenney

ANTHONY GRAFTON

Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. Volume 1. Textual Criticism and Exegesis. 359pp. Oxford University Press. £27.50. 0 19 814850 X

Those who, like Macaulay, begin with the frontispiece, will be disappointed here. There is a good reason for this omission, for the familiar representations of Scaliger are highly misleading. Anthony Grafton's portrayal bears little resemblance, for instance, to the magnificent engraved image that confronts the reader of the 1627 *Letters* over the portentous and pregnant legend, FVIMVS TROES. Such icons belie the reality, which was considerably more complex, and less credible – but more credible. The scholar of whom Mark Pattison wrote that truth "became . . . the very law of his intellect" emerges from this masterly study as above all preoccupied with recognition, and none too scrupulous in the quest for it. It is the development of Scaliger's mind and scholarly activity that Grafton has set out to expound; this is intellectual biography of a severe order, documented in minute technical detail (the notes and appendices take up some 120 pages of close print), and it cannot be pretended that it is easy going.

To the general reader the lives of scholars and scientists are interesting chiefly in virtue of the quirks of their common humanity, endearing or eccentric or outrageous as the case may be, but often having little direct bearing on the assessment of their work. The digamma, though immortalized by Pope, is thrown into the shade by the peripeties of Bentley's long and destructive war with the Fellows of Trinity. What fascinates the non-mathematical reader of R. S. Westfall's brilliant life is the involvements of Newton's quarrel with Leibniz – which had nothing to do with the validity of their discoveries – and his precarious negotiation of theological thin ice. The fundamental insights which have gone to build up the science of historical criticism sound, plainly set out, like truisms. The processes which gave them birth are complicated and frequently obscure, and the problems from which they arose highly technical. The grand projects which will be discussed in Grafton's second volume – Scaliger's epoch-making work on ancient chronology – sprang from the minute and pedantic study of Greek and Latin texts: in Grafton's words, "An accurate intellectual biography of Scaliger must be the story of what he thought about textual problems." There are those who relegate textual criticism to the intellectual level of the crossword puzzle and proof-correction. I cannot suggest a better corrective than a careful reading of this important book.

Its subject amply justifies the nature and the scale of the treatment. Had Richard Bentley never lived, Joseph Justus Scaliger would have been the greatest classical scholar of all time. Bentley found first-rate biographers in Monk and Jebb; Scaliger has deterred enquirers. The standard life until now has been that published in 1855 by Jacob Bernays, a work of great distinction by a scholar whose own stature was such that (we are told) Ingram Bywater, no contemptible judge, would raise his cap whenever he had occasion to pronounce his name in a lecture. Pattison, perhaps the only man in Europe then competent to do so, reviewed Bernays's book and himself projected a biography. His intention was to write Scaliger's life "in connection with the religious history of the time". Rudolf Pfeiffer has commented, "I regret to say that he would never have been able to execute this ambitious plan."

Ambitious it certainly was: Grafton's book strongly suggests that it was fundamentally misconceived. Without doubt Scaliger's religion was important to him – it was no light matter to turn or to remain Protestant in late sixteenth-century France – but it

does not appear to have been the mainspring of his intellectual life, at least not to anything like the degree postulated by Pattison. What actually dominated his career and came close to wrecking it was pride of family. This, of all errors, is one against which a scholar who must have known the works of Horace and Juvenal by heart should in theory have been secure; and indeed in the fatal manifesto in which Scaliger laid himself bare to the furious malice of his enemies he paid lip-service to the commonplace that true nobility is in ourselves: "unusquisque . . . auctor nobilitatis suae." They are hardly to be called our own, observed Ovid's Ulysses, that great meritocrat, of family and ancestors and inherited goods. Scaliger had read these words as he had read everything written in Latin; but if he saw the better he followed the worse.

The roots of this obsession lay in his relationship with his father, Julius Caesar Scaliger's fame as a scholar was overshadowed only after his death by that of his son. Joseph was eighteen when his father died, and for the last four years of the old man's life he had lived and worked under his daily supervision. From this association he acquired two things, a mastery of composition in Latin and the fixed belief that his father was the last of the line of della Scala, lords of Verona. The first formed the basis of his matchless facility in the emendation of texts. The second nearly destroyed him. He had no reason to doubt the truth of his father's story, which indeed was generally accepted by his contemporaries. His princely descent is celebrated in the funeral orations of Heinisius and Badius, as also in the monumental inscription in which his father was described as "PRINCIPVM VERONENSIVM NEPOTIS"; and as

late as 1671 it was confirmed by a grant of Louis XIV. Nevertheless the story was false. Julius, says Grafton bluntly, "was lying". The lie put his son in an impossible position. Pattison in his notes went so far as to say that this belief in his nobility "must form for us the clue to his entire character". This judgment he slightly modified in his review of Bernays; but it is no exaggeration to say that, if the language of Scaliger's letters and of the notorious *Epistola de vetustate gentis Scaligeræ* is anything to go on, his preoccupation with his family identity bordered on paranoia. "I have known for a long time that I am beset [oppugnari] by the enemies of the name I bear." It was not enough to be convinced himself: "not to be drawn as noble is to be known as ignoble."

It was this insistent craving for public recognition, not of deserved but of inherited merit, that led Scaliger to publish in 1594, shortly after his migration to Leiden, the open letter to Dous from which these quotations are taken. One sentence reads ironically: "Somehow men pay more attention to libellous buffoonery than to good books." The dictum was borne out by the appearance in 1607 of Scioptius' *Scaliger Hypobolimus*. This chef d'oeuvre of character-assassination enjoyed an unexpected success in the long term as the principal source for Scaliger's biography. Its immediate and intended effect was shattering in proportion as Scaliger's identification with his noble image was its vigour. The style of his scholarship – its vigour, freedom, panache and arrogance – was the hallmark of an aristocrat who had inherited from his father the very mien of royalty. "Il n'y a Roy, ny Empereur qui est si belle façon que lui: Regardez-moy, je lui ressemble en tout & par tout, le nez aquilin."

It has seemed worth while to emphasize this side of Scaliger, for it is an essential part of the background to the main theme of Grafton's book, his intellectual and scholarly development. This can only be assessed in the context of the personalities and methods of European classical scholarship since the middle of the fifteenth century. The story begins with Angelo Poliziano, or, as I suspect he is still best known to Englishmen, Politian. (Grafton follows an on the whole acceptable middle course in the matter of proper names, though "the Manuzio" as a plural sounds odd to me; and "Turnèbe" is a figment.) It was Politian who formulated the methods and set the standards of critical enquiry for the next generation of scholars; and the story of Scaliger's intellectual formation is the story of his exposure and response to what they made of Politian's legacy. Grafton's preliminary appraisal of the work of Politian and his successors takes up nearly half the book and is an extremely valuable and original contribution to the history of learning in its own right. This complicated and interlocking narrative is unfolded lucidly and with a wealth of examples selected with discrimination from a vast range of sources, identified and usually quoted *in extenso* in the notes.

Scaliger's was one of those minds which receive and improve more than they originate: "creative adaptation" is Grafton's description. His earliest work, the *Coniectanea* on Varro's *De lingua Latina* (1565), is an astonishing display of linguistic and critical virtuosity for a man of twenty-four, recalling, though falling far short of, Bentley's *Epistle to Mill*. There followed, ignoring minor productions, the *Virgilian Appendix* (1573) – so christened by Scaliger and so known

today – and his editions of Ausonius (1574), Festus (1575), Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius (1577) and Manilius (1579). Grafton's analyses of these works bring out sharply Scaliger's strengths and weaknesses as a scholar. He was impatient, sometimes slapdash – at the age of thirty-three he was, remarks Grafton, "still in a hurry" – and he was none too scrupulous about appropriating the work of others without acknowledgment; and above all he loved to show off. On the other side we find a flair for divinatorial criticism which remained until the advent of Bentley (unless Nicolaus Heinisius be also admitted as a contender) in a class by itself; and – what was more important because communicable – a grasp of the principles of what we now call, since German scholarship coined the term some two centuries afterwards, source-criticism, together with the will and the ability to translate them into practice. This is especially evident in the Festus, of which Grafton writes that "he placed all his sources, from Cato through Festus to Paulus and the glossaries, in a new and coherent historical perspective", and in the reconstruction of the lost ancestor of the manuscripts of Catullus; but most of all in the edition of Manilius' *Astronomica*.

It is one of the ironies of the history of scholarship that this trivial farrago of true and false science, elegantly and inaccurately verified and bedizened with purple patches by a second-rate poet with an imperfect grasp of his subject, should have benefited from the attentions of three scholars of the calibre of Scaliger, Bentley and Hausman. Viewed absolutely as a contribution to the exegesis of Manilius Hausman's edition takes pride of place. Historically, however, Scaliger's work for all its manifold imperfections, is the most important, for it led ultimately to the *De emendatione* and the *Thesaurus Temporum*. Here the combination of Scaliger's classical and Near Eastern researches at last bore solid and permanent fruit. By placing Greek, Egyptian and Babylonian contributions to astronomy in their true relationship he prepared the way towards a comprehensive understanding of the history and chronology of the ancient world. This was not at all how the matter presented itself to him at the time. Grafton lets fall the curtain on his Act One with the hero bitterly frustrated by what seemed to him denial of recognition, depressed by the death of his patron and unable to face putting pen to paper. He could not know that his greatest achievements were yet to come.

Scaliger was, Grafton concludes, "all too human". Against the background of contemporary practices and attitudes, and when due allowance is made for the consequences of the terrible wrong inflicted on him by his father, his behaviour can be understood even if it cannot always be condoned. His lapses in scholarship surprise because they are Scaliger's. Grafton occasionally gives him the benefit of the doubt when he does not really deserve it. No amount of special pleading can pass off his retranslation of Republican drama as anything but a *jeu d'esprit*. A more serious point arises in connection with his wholesale transpositions in the text of Propertius and Tibullus. The "one place of evidence" that Grafton produces in defence of this unhistorical proceeding will not wash. From Ovid's allusions to Tibullus in the second book of the *Tristia* Scaliger had inferred that in the text used by Ovid the order of the verses differed: from that in our manuscripts. This is totally fallacious. Ovid was not Nonius Marcellus, and no learned poet would condescend to anything so mechanical as incorporating his borrowings and allusions in exactly their original order. How Ovid laid Tibullus under contribution can be seen in *Amores* 3.9. Scaliger's argument came off the top of his head and should have been allowed to die at birth. An instance, then, of his frailty with which it is perhaps not inappropriate to end a notice of this first part of Grafton's fine characterization of a supremely gifted scholar and thoroughly mixed-up man.

Waving to Elizabeth

For Elizabeth Bishop

For mapmakers' reasons the transcontinental air routes must have been diverted today, and Sunderland's stratosphere is being webbed over by shiny almost invisible spider jets creeping with deliberate intention across the skin-like air, each suspended from the chalky silk of its passing. Thready at first, as if written by two, or four, fine felt nibs, the lines become cloudy as the planes cease to need them, in freedom they dissolve. Just as close observation dissipates in the wind of theory.

Eight or nine of them now, and all writing at once, rising from the south on slow rails, slow arcs, an armillary prevented by necessity from completing its evidence, but unravelling instead in soft powdery stripes, which seem to be the only clouds there are between what's simply here as park, house, roof, road, car, etc. and the wide long view they must have of us there, if they bother to look. They have taken so much of us up with them, too –

money and newspapers, meals, toilets, old films, hot coffee – yet the miles between us, though measurable, seem unreal. I have to think, "Here it is, June 19th, 1983. I'm waving from a waste patch by the Thornhill School." As perhaps you think back from your trip through the cosmos, "Here where I love it is no time at all. The geography looks wonderful. This high smooth sea's more quiet than the maps, though the map, relieved of mapmakers, looks imprisoned and free."

Anne Stevenson

In not so mute admiration

Kenneth O. Morgan

WILLIAM MANCHESTER

The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, Visions of Glory. 1874-1932

973pp. Michael Joseph. £14.95. 0 7181 2275 5

The lion in William Manchester's title is of Biblical rather than of British origin. It refers to "the lion in the Revolution", "the first beast with six wings about him and full of eyes within". Mr Manchester first met Winston Churchill - who has the misfortune to represent this zoological phenomenon - in the *Verandah Grill* of the Queen Mary ("the greatest of the Cunarders", we are infallibly reminded) in 1953, and enjoyed several long conversations during the five days' voyage to Southampton. Manchester, so he informs us, was rapt in silent admiration at meeting this wonder of the age. "Alone with him, I was mute, having in fact nothing to say."

Thirty years, and nearly half a million words on, there is unfortunately no great advance to record. Indeed, the circumstances in which his fascination with Churchill was first aroused, conveyed much of the flavour of this over-written, discursive and unscholarly book. Uncritical adulation combines with indiscriminate anecdote to produce a work which contains the bathos of *Death of a President*, with none of its tension of immediacy. Several American historians have recently given us admirable biographical insights into British political leaders of the twentieth century: Asquith and Lloyd George are among those who have so benefited. Winston Churchill, alas, supreme prophet of the English-speaking people, is doomed to be a victim of the transatlantic yoke. Manchester's thousand pages do not proceed far beyond the level of curiosity of those coach-loads of his countrymen who provide regular traffic jams in the little village of Bladon on a summer's afternoon. His efforts may be contrasted with those of Martin Gilbert, whose massive multi-volume biography has sometimes been criticised for a reluctance to offer considered judgments on its subject. Manchester sprays opinions on Churchill and on British society and culture with the persistence of a sten gun, but to little avail. He cannot approach the dignity and scholarly comprehensiveness of the official life.

This book takes us from Churchill's birth (or rather from well before it,

since on the first page we are launched into the campaign strategy of Boudicca and the loom in the remotest past) down to the period of the 1931 general election. The concluding date alone is a puzzle. It prevents the author from producing the kind of rounded synthesis, pungent if debatable, achieved by Robert Rhodes James's *Study in Failure* which spanned the entire period down to September 1939.

The problems of this new book are numerous. They relate to Manchester's use of sources; the discursive, journalistic irrelevances which interrupt his account of Churchill's career; and the overall conceptual approach towards Britain, the political process, and the historical personality of Churchill himself. The handling of sources is in itself a key to some of the book's weaknesses. Apart from Gilbert's *Companion Volumes*, to which due and generous tribute is rightly paid, there is an unresistance of touch and a good deal of plain ignorance. Among other problems, the author seems to believe that our public records are still controlled by a fifty-year rule and that therefore (the mathematics seem uncertain at this point) the archives for the period down to 1932 are inaccessible. He has only the patchiest knowledge of the more important secondary literature, too. The treatment of Lord Randolph, including Winston's remarkable biography of him, suggests Manchester is unaware of the contents of Roy Foster's important study. Much of the source material seems to have been quarried by long-distance research assistance: one lady, we are told, "was as reliable as the sturdiest English oak". It seems to have been supplemented by endless anecdotes supplied over varied forms of English hospitality - "a shining bottle of prime bourbon" from Lord Boothby, "an alcoholic mist", courtesy of Churchill College, Cambridge; more fruitfully no doubt, "biscuits in Twicken Road". Such a basis for research does not, perhaps, inspire total confidence.

Even worse, poor Winston's life is made the springboard for compulsive journalistic musings on late-Victorian or Edwardian Britain. The first major chapter, entitled (with the inevitability of death) "Land of Hope and Glory", is an anthology of clichés which introduces us to almost every one of Churchill's leading *fin-de-siècle* contemporaries, from General Gordon to Jack the Ripper. At last, on page 108, Winston is actually born. But even after this, there follow constant interruptions and diversions with much child psychology (post Spock, *ergo* propter Spock) and long

accounts of the alleged sexual mores of the upper-class British and the Americans who apparently engage in a pursuit known mysteriously as "peering down Pennsylvania Avenue". Such details as Churchill's entry into parliament or the Cabinet, labour exchanges or the Tonypandy riots ("the battle of Glamorgan valley", achieved by Robert Rhodes James's *Study in Failure* which spanned the entire period down to September 1939. The problems of this new book are numerous. They relate to Manchester's use of sources; the discursive, journalistic irrelevances which interrupt his account of Churchill's career; and the overall conceptual approach towards Britain, the political process, and the historical personality of Churchill himself. The handling of sources is in itself a key to some of the book's weaknesses. Apart from Gilbert's *Companion Volumes*, to which due and generous tribute is rightly paid, there is an unresistance of touch and a good deal of plain ignorance. Among other problems, the author seems to believe that our public records are still controlled by a fifty-year rule and that therefore (the mathematics seem uncertain at this point) the archives for the period down to 1932 are inaccessible. He has only the patchiest knowledge of the more important secondary literature, too. The treatment of Lord Randolph, including Winston's remarkable biography of him, suggests Manchester is unaware of the contents of Roy Foster's important study. Much of the source material seems to have been quarried by long-distance research assistance: one lady, we are told, "was as reliable as the sturdiest English oak". It seems to have been supplemented by endless anecdotes supplied over varied forms of English hospitality - "a shining bottle of prime bourbon" from Lord Boothby, "an alcoholic mist", courtesy of Churchill College, Cambridge; more fruitfully no doubt, "biscuits in Twicken Road". Such a basis for research does not, perhaps, inspire total confidence.

Finally, the understanding of the British political and social scene, and Churchill's role in it, is limited in the extreme. The book is riddled with factual mistakes, too numerous to mention. It is most alive when handling wars and battles, as befits a former biographer of General MacArthur. The tactics of Omdurman and an strategy of the Dardanelles campaign are vigorously described. But on the main continuing themes that animated Churchill's career, and his political philosophy, we learn next to nothing. What kind of empire did Churchill actually visualize? How did his ideas apply to the changing pattern of empire before 1918? How did he relate to the British party system and to our class structure? What thoughts did he have on economic matters? What view did he take of the unity and divisiveness of British society (in which social mobility, so Manchester incredibly tells us, "had never existed")? Paul Addison has written perceptively on Churchill's concept of social order, and hinted that he might even have been a proto-Social Democrat. No such depth of analysis of insight intrudes here. Winston Churchill, like that "chameleon" David Lloyd George, has in the past suffered from a surfeit of journalistic technicolour. He needs more restrained treatment, including black, white, and most known shades of grey. As a politician, he was inspired by a profound awareness of history. He demands a similar quality from his would-be biographers.

On the shady side

M. R. D. Foot

JOSEPHINE BUTLER

Churchill's Secret Agent
205pp. Ashburton, Devon: Blaketon-Hall. £8.95.
0 907854 02 8

DOUGLAS DODDS-PARKER

Setting Europe Ablaze: Some Account of Ungentlemanly Warfare
224pp. Windlesham, Surrey: Springwood Books. £7.95.
0 86254 113 1

Soon after the saintly Spanish abess of Agreda, Sor Maria de Jesus, died in 1665 her Franciscan admirers credited her with five hundred miraculous journeys by air in Mexico to convert the heathen. More modestly, the admirer of Josephine Butler who wrote the dust-cover of *Churchill's Secret Agent* only claims that she was "flown more than fifty times into occupied territory" during the last world war, although she herself described no more than sixteen missions, all to France. Each, she claims, began by a jump - without benefit of parachute - from a Lysander flying at four feet above the ground.

Her book was bound to interest me. I was once a parachutist, took a minimal part in the French resistance struggle, and wrote twenty years ago from archives still not made public - an official history of part of it. An appendix to my book lists the fifty women who went to France for subversive purposes in 1941-44. Josephine Butler, however, does not appear in it, for (she claims) she worked directly under Churchill, in a unit far too small and far too secret for me to have been allowed to hear of it.

Admirable cover: there were several things about the Special Operations Executive, and its then officially non-existent rival, the Secret (or Special) Intelligence Service - SOE and SIS - that I realized I would not be allowed to find out when I was working on *SOE in France*. I took care for instance not to ask to see deciphered enemy messages, a request that I knew would embarrass the officials who would have to refuse it. I had trouble in finding out what was done by SOE's outstation in Algeria, because all its records had been destroyed; in particular, I could find out little about the killing of Admiral Darlan, a point on which - as will appear below - the truth has been concealed till Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker has been able to reveal it this summer. So the fact that Dr Butler was left out of my book does not mean that her tales are untrue.

But are they credible? Sixteen missions - let alone over fifty - by a single agent are an awful lot to swallow. The admirable Victor Gerson, who ran an SOE escape line from Paris through Lyon and Perpignan to Barcelona, managed seven missions into France, six from England, one from Spain. Richard Heale and Ben Couburn, two of the stoutest of Buckmaster's agents, each made four. No one else, according to SOE's records, managed as many. Yet-Thomas ("The White Rabbit") was caught on his third. Madeleine Fourcade, author of *Noah's Ark* (1973), was regarded as exceptionally lucky by SIS when she held out for much more than the six months they thought was the reasonable limit of agent endurance. She - like Josephine Butler - was and is character far out of the ordinary. Still, sixteen missions beggar belief.

The method, too, is beyond belief. During parachute training, "I, like many others, learnt to tumble off the back of a moving jeep. The jeep never exceeded 30 mph; as above, that speed was twice that speed. A Lysander stalls; it cannot fly at all. Dr Butler mentions that she learnt the trick of low jumping at the twenty-sixth attempt, and during the previous twenty-five tries only lost a few teeth.

What finally dished her credibility for me was her account of sitting beside the pilot in a Lysander, and, later, of putting an unconscious passenger beside the pilot to be taken back from near Lyon - at the extreme limit of a

Lysander's range - to England. The pilot "glanced at the trussed-up passenger and said laconically, 'That one will be no trouble. If he wakes up and gets nasty I'll knock him out again.' " But a Lysander's cockpit is so small that there is barely room in it for the pilot: he is cut off from his passenger or passengers by a stout bulkhead behind him. Anyone who doubts this can go and look at a Lysander in the RAF Museum at Hendon.

The pity is that Dr Butler's book, for all that it is studded with improbabilities and impossibilities (and a fair share of minor howlers too, about the brute facts of the secret struggle), nevertheless preaches those virtues of the nation - any nation - is most in need: self-sacrifice, courage, reverence for the good and a stem hatred of evil. It pretends to be history; it should be shelved with Andersen and Grimm, Carroll and Tolkien.

Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker's book by contrast recounts a series of all-but-incredible adventures which in sober fact are true. As a well-travelled young man, who had worked in the Sudan civil service, he was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards. As he had found out something already in the Sudan about security and intelligence, he was absorbed into MIRA, a research department of the War Office devoted to irregular warfare. In July 1940 MIRA was fused with section D of SIS to form SOE, and in SOE Dodds-Parker played an important, unobtrusive role. He was the link-man in Khartoum between the British high command and SOE's expeditions into Ethiopia (one of them led by Orde Wingate), which helped to restore Haile Selassie to the throne from which Mussolini had driven him. He had charge of SOE's base just outside Algiers, from which operations were mounted into Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and mainland France and Italy. He explains how the first Italian approaches to the Allies, were made through the set of a recently escaped SOE wireless operator, Dick Malby. Later he moved forward to Sicily, was at Alexander's elbow for much of the rest of the war, and puts the land-slide British contribution to the Italian campaign in a much brighter light than has so far shone on it.

The most riveting passage in his book recounts what happened after the "Torch" landings by American and British troops in north-west Africa in November 1942. With Roosevelt's and Stalin's approval, General Eisenhower made a pact with Admiral Darlan, Marshal Pétain's deputy, who happened to be in Algiers at the time. Darlan ordered the local civil servants to collaborate with the newly arrived Allies. This pact caused sharp indignation in England, and still sharper in France, where those resistance movements that were in contact with London indicated that they would cease all their efforts unless it was revoked. As is well known, a young man called Bonnier de la Chapelle walked up to Darlan on Christmas Eve, shot him dead, and was shot himself after summary trial within forty-eight hours. Colonel Dodds-Parker now reveals that Bonnier de la Chapelle was armed, trained, and ordered forward to his task by SOE. He was SOE's credit. It was a pity that SOE could not protect him against Darlan's friends, who worked on General Giraud over the holiday to cancel the reprieve that the assassin thought he had deserved.

Dodds-Parker's book glows with admiration for his chief, Sir Colin Gubbins, one of the most original and influential - if least known - of Britain's wartime leaders. He has made a bold attempt to put in straightforward terms a tale of almost inconceivable complexity. Dr Butler would agree with him in cherishing "hopes of a world in which all might stand straight, without fear, without rancour". Post-war history has not always followed lines either of them would much approve. He too counts a howler now and then: on a single page, he inadvertently dates Hitler's invasion of the Rhineland in 1934 and puts the 1933 East Fulham by-election in 1936. In spite of such slips, he commands a historian's confidence; Dr Butler does not.

A prince of self-approval

Alan Hollinghurst

EDMUND WHITE

A Boy's Own Story
218pp. Picador. £2.50.
0 330 28151 8

A Boy's Own Story is on the face of it a book about growing up; behind its title lies the salubrious little-manly world of the *Boy's Own Paper*, with its emphasis on adventure, instruction and initiative; further off stand Mark Twain, Richard Jefferies, H. O. Sturgis, even Forrest Reid. Edmund White's primary irony is to make the story of a homosexual boy; the time-scheme is jagged around so that there is some brisk buggery in the first chapter, and the sexual latencies of the Edwardian literature of boyhood are rendered emphatically overt. This is, in fact, a mere showing of the hand; there is next to no sexual description in the rest of the book, for its real subject is not sex but sensibility. The preliminary concholing with Kevin in *A Boy's Own Story* is an exception in an early life which is all unfocused longing, reiterative fantasy (of enslaving an older man) and vain speculation.

There are tinges of autobiography in the book: the boy's father, for example, shares several characteristics with White's own father as described in his *Sinister Desire*. Such quarryings of personal experience may be irrelevant to the evaluation of a novel, but the pseudo-autobiographical structure of this novel creates inner tensions which are by no means fully resolved. The fictional adult narrator stands in a complex unspecified relation to his earlier self, and this is all mixed up with White's own involvement in his material. As he suggests himself, the fiction can be considered a form of "lies", an exquisite invention to take him "from one poor truth to another"; truths which take the shape of reflections, now essayistic, now

poetical, on imagination, desire and experience. His achievement, then, is to forswear a jejune adaptation of the traditional boy's tale, of the adventures, lessons and initiatives of the novel, and love, are all self-gratifying, introspective, almost onanistic in their savoured sensuousness. Instead of a final harmony and maturity the boy's concluding draught from "the adult fountain of sex" - his betrayal of a schoolmaster he has seduced - is an act of brutal callousness, succinctly analysed as such. It is part of the novel's psychological coherence that he is so consistently egotistical, and that there are uncertainties as to whose story is a homosexual boy; the egotism this is - White's, his narrator's or the boy's. "I like the fifteen-year-old (even desire him), self-approval never accompanying, but always trailing experience, retrospection (three parts sentimental and one part erotic). The result is a claustrophobic confession of self-regard.

Many of White's observations are piercingly acute, his ruminations subtle and irresistible. His settings - schools, summer-houses, medium-sized towns - are poignantly caught. He evokes the extreme singleness and the baroque imaginative convolutions of adolescence with absolute conviction. He describes with precision the years of vacuous joshing, the defensive inarticulacy of boys, and how this inarticulacy a boy reads into such inarticulacy a belief in passions which are not only unspoken but prove not to exist. He focuses a welcome degree of attention on the significance of art and classical music for youngsters, worlds in which the articulation of fantasy scenarios is miraculously achieved. But this precision and art are often rendered by preciosity and artiness.

From the start we recognize a tendency to elaborate metaphor: "The night, intent, stressed, fed the fabric of water under the need of our will"; "the waves dragon scales writhing under a sainted knight's halo"; when

he evokes "the fell of shame" the intensely self-conscious usage must be an echo of Hopkins. Nineties feyness is one ingredient in a manner that shows a disconcerting instability. Time and again a dense but effective paragraph is whipped up to an ecstasy of metaphorical contrivance. When we read of fish as "dripping, squirming ore only in fear from the lake's mines" we hear the tones of a school prize essay, the metaphor being pursued to the full extent of its failure. But then, "the terrible, decaying Camembert of the humble calyx of his jeans"; "the windblown hair intricate as Velázquez's rendering of lace"; "a dog's stale turd leached of everything except its palest quintessence" are turns of speech which, supposedly drawing us into keener insight, succeed only in distancing us in myth, embarrassment or incredulity. A recurrent image of the unrecognized latency of the boy is that of princes, or kings, in disguise; but when we read "I was basalt with indignation" we are hearing the forced and yet strangely complacent diction of queens. People whom White evokes "tangled up in the tulle of thought" are indulging in something closely akin to the drag-ball of his language.

As the novel's concern is with sensibility so its success, and its convincingness as an invented autobiography, will depend on the sensibility with which it is rendered. This remains critically uncertain. Is White merely writing in as fine a fashion as he can; or is he intentionally challenging some assumed norm of decorous heterosexual writing by creating a style that is overblown, self-advertising, narcissistic, the liveliest of a specifically homosexual literary position? The teasing artifice with which the boy is treated by the man he has become locks them in a strange bond of vanity, but it is impossible to assess how consciously and how ironically this quality is established and admitted by Edmund White.

A bleary-eyed bohemian

John Melmoth

IAN COCHRANE

The Slipstream
140pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 573 03352 5

At a time when the virtues of work, thrift and self-reliance are being urged at Westminster, Ian Cochrane has written a comic novel about unemployment. This is neither callous nor opportunistic scoring of political points. Cochrane's characters caper merrily along in the wake of the Welfare State. Neither stylish nor witty, they aspire to marginality and obscurity, scorn jobs, respectability, class allegiances and even basic home comforts. Feckless, shiftless, inconsequential, maundering and daft, they epitomize the triumph of the weak-willed, personifying the inalienable human right to live outside the system. They take according to their needs but reject all obligation to give according to their abilities. *The Slipstream* celebrates blissful imperturbability, inactivity and underachievement, and explores the manifold possibilities of uselessness.

The novel is set in the grubby nether world of Notting Hill's bedsitterland in the early 1960s, when one could get pig-pigs for a pound and Cliff Richard was on every juke-box enumerating the advantages of his "Living Doll". Ron Connolly, the young Irish artist, is chronically incapable of actually getting down to any painting. His basement room serves as a meeting place for like-minded mates: Dennis who is alone in regarding himself as an "Elvis look-alike"; Anthony, his homosexual manager, and snapper-up of effeminate policemen; and Vic, a trainee teacher and accomplished slob. Poverty and boozers all, they distract themselves with petty crime and the criminal petting of toothsome under-

language of landlords and bureaucrats, they gleefully dismember it. Their interminable conversations are larded with obscenities, linguistic games, jokes, profanities, scriptural misquotations, dislocated homilies and trite conjunctions of proverbs. They also trade in pastiche as a form of practical criticism, exposing the pretensions of, psychoanalytic discourse; the steamy exchanges of the confessional, the mindless generalizations of racism and the tawdry revelations of letters from home.

The apparent facility of *The Slipstream* is the result of Cochrane's meticulous deployment of words and scrupulous marshalling of effects. The fact that its range is limited does not diminish its impact. The genial banality of life is occasionally riven by moments of pain and unnerving, surreal whimsy. In a world which, if not exactly menacing, is not particularly welcoming, Ron's messy bohemianism, compounded of innocence, shyness and incomprehension, is not unattractive.

Ophelia

Where the pool unfurls its undercloud -
There she goes.

And through and through
The kneading tumble and the water-hammer.

If it trout leaps into air, it is not for a breather.
It has to drop back immediately

Into this peculiar engine
That made it and keeps it going

And that works it to death - there she goes

Darkish, finger to her lips,
Staring into the afterworld.

Ted Hughes

Love-objects

Mary Kathleen Benet

ANNE LEATON

Good Friends, Just
152pp. Chatto and Windus. £7.95
(paperback, £3.50).
0 7011 2710 4

Those tired of wondering why there is no female Shakespeare might give a thought to why there is no female Wilde or Firkbank, in whom the theme of male homosexuality, with its longing for beauty and elegance, produces beautiful and elegant prose. When will the theme of lesbianism do as much? Reading *Good Friends, Just*, with its elegant title and its series of failed epigrams, one is tempted to think that the subject itself invites squalor. Do male homosexuals try to take on "feminine" subtleties and ways of pleasing, while lesbians try to lose them?

Certainly nothing could be more squalid than the life of the central character, Maddy. In the modern fashion, we are given few surnames and little background, but it appears that Maddy and her love-object Georgina are American women working in Istanbul. On what is intended to be a tryst in Istanbul, they see a lot of their Turkish friends, Gunzel and Melek, also apparently a lesbian couple. The holiday degenerates into an emotional free-for-all. Georgina is coy with Maddy but jealous of Gunzel's attentions to her; Melek inexplicably gets pregnant; Gunzel spends most of

note by Marshall McLuhan, to the effect that "Hinges is a structuralist play in which Elzorg dispenses with the dictionaire in favour of the synchronic. People... include all possible levels of meaning and experience, yet are immediately physical presences"; and the complete text of a short novel, *The Mystery of the Kingfisher Bar*, by George Moor, who although British has "for some years taught English abroad, most notably in Saudi Arabia, Japan and Iran". The Publisher's introduction, promising six works rather than the offered five, still manages to do what it can to encourage wider rather than narrower literary interest by giving a platform to established work of uneconomic lengths [sic] and to writers who have something new to say or a new way to say it.

A BOY'S OWN STORY EDMUND WHITE

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W. D. RUBINSTEIN

The Left, The Right and The Jews
234pp. Croom Helm, £11.95.
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The late Cecil Roth's *History of the Jews in England* was first published in 1941. In spite of the voluminous research which has been conducted since then on all aspects of Anglo-Jewish history, Roth's book (still in print) remains the best synoptic account of the subject. In retrospect, however, it suffers from one glaring fault. Roth begins with a discussion of the Norman origins of the Anglo-Jewish community; he proceeds through its medieval travails to the expulsion of 1290. After an interlude devoted to a characteristically affectionate portrait of the tiny group of crypto-Jews (*Marranos*) who found refuge in England after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century, Roth's narrative moves in a gathering crescendo from the readmission of the Jews to England under Cromwell to the climax of his story, their emancipation in 1858. And there Roth ends. A brief coda notes that after 1881 the number of Jews in England more than tripled as a result of the great influx of refugees from Russia. But Roth does no more than remark that what he terms "the alembic of English tolerance" operated on these newer arrivals as on their forerunners and leaves it at that.

Emancipation was, of course, much more a beginning than an end; certainly any understanding of the contemporary Jewish community must be based more on the roots of the East and Central European immigrants of the past century than on the objects of Roth's attention. Moreover, as M. C. N. Salbstein remarks, the question is not merely "How did the Jews in Britain come to receive their Emancipation?" but also "What type of Emancipation was it that they eventually achieved?" It is a question which is posed more effectively than it is answered, for the bulk of Salbstein's book consists of a rather old-fashioned political narrative of the battle for the admission of Jews to Parliament.

Where Salbstein breaks new and fruitful ground is in his treatment of the internal conflicts within the Jewish community over the tactics to be adopted in the emancipation struggle. He shows that the community was far from united; indeed, not only over tactics but also over the very desirability of emancipation itself. Among the Jewish opponents of emancipation was the strange figure of Rabbi Joseph Crooll, teacher of Hebrew in Cambridge, who wore a curious, parchment-girdle bearing inscriptions from the scriptures and the Talmud. Between 1812 and 1829, Crooll wrote three books, arguing the case against emancipation from an orthodox Jewish standpoint. Influenced by those central European rabbis who had urged their congregations to refuse Joseph II's *Toleranzpatent* as inconsistent with the

imminent redemption and restoration of Zion, Crooll insisted (in a letter which was read to the House of Commons in 1833): "Remember this, you can be no freeman except in the land of Canaan." Crooll predicted that the restoration of Israel would take place in 1840, the Jewish year 5600; he died in 1829.

Crooll's colourful eccentricity was of little importance save as additional ammunition for parliamentary opponents of emancipation. More representative and in many ways central to an explanation of the lengthy Jewish waiting-period after the emancipation of all other non-Anglican sects, was the attitude of the leading figure of the community, Moses Montefiore. Opposing those who urged a vigorous public campaign for the removal of all disabilities, Montefiore favoured a more piecemeal, gradualist approach. "We should accept all we can get," he wrote to the Rothschilds, arguing that too sudden an emancipation might tempt some of the newly freed away from the strict observance of their religion. To this extent he was drawing on the same fundamental idea as Crooll, albeit that the two men inhabited alien mental worlds.

Salbstein substantiates his argument that "one reason, if not the most important, for the initial failure to secure Emancipation lay in the conflict of aspirations to be found among the leaders and self-appointed leaders of the Jewish community". He lays due stress on the role of Disraeli as an advocate of the cause of Jewish emancipation, but he errs in dubbing him a "Marrano", which Disraeli (a convert in his youth) was neither by descent nor in a figurative sense. The Marranos were, above all, Jews who concealed their origins; no Jew flaunted them more than the author of *Tancred*.

It is perhaps a pity that Salbstein focuses primarily on the political and legal facets of his subject, if less so than most previous writers. The answer to his second question of what sort of emancipation was actually achieved could usefully have been conceived in broader terms. Salbstein follows Roth in ending with the immediate aftermath of the admission of Jews to the House of Commons.

Harold Pollins has a very different angle of vision. He devotes only a brief introductory chapter to the period before 1858. Given the extraordinarily rich documentation of the economic activities of Jews in medieval England one might have wished for more in a book with this title. The first third of the book deals with the period before 1880, the remainder with the great transformation wrought by the mass Jewish immigration to England thereafter. The earlier chapters, in particular, draw heavily on secondary sources. There is some useful analysis of Jewish occupational distribution and Pollins writes with insight and sympathy about the development of Jewish religious nationalism. The chapters dealing with the middle class and Jewish entrepreneurs are more predictable. A narrower focus on the Jewish working class might have yielded a more readable book. As it is one is left wanting to know less about the Clores and the Cohens and more about such exotics as the Sheffield Jewish Tailors' Sabbath Observance and Benefit Society and occupational diseases in the Jewish trades.

Occupational diseases and benevolent societies of different sorts loom large in the underworld explored by Edward J. Bristow. His panoramic survey of Jewish prostitutes, pimps and campaigners against vice is rightly international in scope. For like that other, underworld of revolutionary socialism, these were diseases that migrated across oceans and formed extraordinary intercontinental links. Not untypical was the case of the New York madam, Sadie Solomon, who was reported to have run disorderly houses in Johannesburg, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Panama, Texas and Vancouver. Occasionally the two internationalists clashed head-on. In 1905 members of the Jewish socialist party, the Bund, launched an assault on the red-light district of Warsaw; the brawl degenerated into a full-scale riot which left eight dead and 100

wounded. In a similar incident in Buenos Aires in 1908, the socialist-Zionist, Nahman Syrkin, challenged the white slavers who were said to dominate the theatres, and pimps were forced out of the theatre by young Zionists. In a curious mirror-image of the Zabatovist police unions, the *Okhrana* around the turn of the century sought to use the underworld of vice to monitor and even to counter the other more menacing underworld of revolutionary agitation.

Bristow leaves us with a number of striking vignettes—the Jewish brothel-keepers who studied Talmud in provincial Argentina, the pretzel baker who became owner of a chain of brothels throughout east Asia, the Drucker family's brothel at Delagoa Bay in Mozambique, and many others. The names of many of the slaves and enslaved are evocative: Issy Cockroach, Mike Pike (vice king of the Chicago west side), Toothless Itzig, Jenny the Factory, and others. The large number of terms used to denote pimps of some lexicographic interest: among them *pezeveniks* in Constantinople, *naquedreux* in Portland, Oregon, *zushickers* in New York, and *alphoneses* in Warsaw—whence *Alphonserel*, *Alphonsepogrom*, and, according to Mr Bristow, *ponce*.

Bristow places the phenomenon well in the context of the processes of rapid modernization, urbanization, migration, secularization, discrimination, and immiseration which were determining the lives of East European Jews between the 1870s and the 1930s. We are given vivid glimpses of the outlawed communities of Jews engaged in vice: the *Zvi Migdal* Society in Buenos Aires, the New York Independent Benevolent Association and other such bodies provided a full range of services to their members, including burial rights in cemeteries set apart from those of the rest of the Jewish community. Sometimes the sense of communal shame which led to the erosion of these barriers in the case of the earliest Jewish cemetery in Johannesburg, Braamfontein, where, we are told, the fence which formerly separated discredited individuals who

rented out property for immoral purposes was later removed.

The international range of the subject-matter and the inevitably incomplete biographies of the rapidly changing cast of characters lends the book an unfortunately disjointed and episodic character. Sometimes the author's enthusiasm for his subject seems to get the better of him, resulting in a literary style more reminiscent of *Tibet* or the *Police Gazette* than is usual in publications of the Oxford University Press. Incongruously allied to this occasional descent into a "what-the-butler-saw" series of sexual cameos is the author's apparent embrace of the notion, popularized by some feminist historians such as Judith Walkowitz and Ruth Rosen, that prostitutes, rather than being passive sexual slaves, tended to be actors in history who chose prostitution voluntarily and rationally as a survival strategy. While this is perhaps true of some prostitutes, the evidence which Bristow himself presents suggests that more to do with the priorities of feminism in the 1980s than with the realities of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement around the turn of the century.

In spite of these defects, Bristow's book is an original and valuable contribution to social history which ventures into an area that Jewish historians for understandable reasons have tended to avoid. The effort to overcome a tradition of defensiveness and apologetics is indeed a major feature of modern Jewish historiography. Cecil Roth was one of the pioneers of this professional, non-lachrymose approach to Jewish history and as Reader in Jewish Studies at Oxford, President of the Jewish Historical Society of England and Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, his influence was pervasive. It was largely due to his efforts (and those of Lucien Wolf) that Anglo-Jewish history was saved from the twin dangers of genealogy and anti-Semitism. A serious assessment of Roth's life and work would be welcome. Irene Roth does not provide it. She cheerfully admits that she does

not wish to deal with her late husband's biography of uxorious piety enlivened by some amusing anecdotes. What makes the book worth reading from cover to cover is Irene Roth's mastery of the art of name-dropping: nobody worth mentioning seems to have been left out, from Eddie Cantor to Queen Mary.

The Jewish community that Roth knew continues to change. Latest estimates put the size of the Jewish population of Britain at no more than 385,000. The number of Jewish marriages in Britain is the lowest for more than a hundred years. In these circumstances of steady demographic decline (reflected in nearly all other Diaspora communities) the influence, especially the political influence, of Jews might be expected to decline also. W. D. Rubinstein argues that in fact the period since 1945 has been one of growth in Jewish political influence in most Western countries, arising from their disproportionate representation in the élites of countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia. The suggestion that Jewish voting patterns are now conforming more than in the past to socio-economic status (that is, Jews are moving to the right) appears to be borne out by several recent studies. But Rubinstein spoils his argument by pressing it too far and by discounting contrary evidence (particularly from the US). He dismisses the "fallacy" that Jews have a "natural affinity" for the political left.

The composition of Mrs Thatcher's new Cabinet (three Jews among senior ministers) might seem to bear him out. But notwithstanding recent suggestions to the contrary, there is probably not much of a distinctive and specific "Jewish vote" in any Western country. Even in the US, where ethnic voting is much more common than elsewhere, most Jews probably vote on other than purely ethnic grounds. Most of the signs suggest that in liberal democracies the "alembic of tolerance" is working towards a paradoxical conclusion: emancipation of the Jews and their loss of political (or any other) distinctiveness is leading to their fading away altogether.

Birth of the booth

Brian Harrison

B. L. KINZER

The Ballot Question in Nineteenth-Century English Politics
302pp. New York: Garland.

Lord Hugh Cecil, the wittiest of British women's parliamentary champions, told Parliament in 1910 that voting was now "a serenely tranquil, an austere refuge and from beginning to end a thoroughly ladylike occupation". As on June 9 this year, we all took it for granted that over thirty million people, voting-cards in hand, would make their way to the polls in sober and civic mood, almost as though going to church. Yet it has not always been so, and it is surprising that B. L. Kinzer should be the first historian with the curiosity to ask how it all came about. Nor is his narrative without present-day significance, if only because some of the enemies of the ballot in the nineteenth century used arguments which have recently been refurbished for use against the idea of strike ballots.

Kinzer shows how the ballot had already become a powerful missile to hurl against the aristocracy by the early 1830s, but after reaching a peak in the late 1830s, the cause declined in the 1840s. It was the cause of the Ballot Society which was formed in 1833, but declined again during Palmerston's supremacy, only to revive yet again in the late 1860s, when Gladstone mounted the campaign which forced it through Parliament against tenacious Tory obstruction. In 1872 Conservatives were almost unanimous against the ballot, whose surreptitiousness offended against the sense of public responsibility required of the voter and

against the openness of conduct expected of an Englishman. Here then is another current Conservative fashion with a respectable nineteenth-century Liberal pedigree.

Kinzer's well-documented, clearly written monograph joins that select collection of recent studies which show how nineteenth-century parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activists harassed McCord on the Corn Laws, Shannon on Bulgarian atrocities, McHugh on state-regulated prostitution and Rosen on women's suffrage. Kinzer brings a subtle capacity for interpreting political motive and situation to bear. He is not primarily concerned with the situation in the constituencies or with the ballot's impact; it is the dynamics and the structure of the campaign for it that interest him. In this preoccupation Kinzer is once again topical—though it is doubtful whether this kind of historical literature will impinge on those historically conscious enthusiasts Livingstone, Tatchell and Scargill.

The leaders of the ballot crusade are portrayed as relatively ineffective, and the Ballot Society's significance is small by comparison with the impact of statesmen—whether through the retarding influence of Lord John Russell and Palmerston or the accelerating influence of John Bright and (after 1868) Gladstone. "The adoption of the ballot was very much an affair of high politics," Kinzer writes. In response to widespread popular demand? "There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that any such demand existed," he declares. The Ballot Act of 1872 originated in Gladstone's desire as Liberal leader to tempt John Bright into his ministry of 1868: Bright demanded the ballot as an entry-fee; hence the denouement of 1866-72 which takes up two-thirds of Kizer's book. Perhaps the "high

politics" argument is a little overdone. While it usefully scales down the political significance of noisy people, such an argument takes too little account of the "low politics" involved in Gladstone's need to annex Bright's popularity to his ministry, and Bright would hardly have backed the ballot if it was not sufficiently popular in the country at large to strengthen the Liberal cause.

Kinzer does not aim to assess in detail the long-term impact of the ballot, but it is worth emphasizing in conclusion three respects in which it brought loss as well as gain. Its advent helped to deprive general elections of their social and community dimension; politics and recreation were moving apart. Second, it deprived the Liberal Party of opportunities for informal primary elections; until 1872, no Liberals could stand as candidates in a constituency during the first hour of voting, at the end of which the Liberal running second could withdraw. Finally, Lord Hugh Cecil might have pointed out that feminists were capitalizing as early as 1873 on the new situation the ballot had created. Women now had more reason to demand the vote because they could no longer scrutinize the voting behaviour of the men whose vote was exercised partly in trust for them. The ballot had also gradually removed a major objection to women voting on their own behalf; as their spokesman Jacob Bright emphasized, "a woman can now go to the polling booth and return from it with far greater ease than she experiences in making her way out of a theatre or a concert-room".

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STEPHEN JOHNSON

Late Roman Fortifications
315pp. Batsford, £37.50.
0 7154 3476 7

The Pax Romana did not explicitly forbid defensive walls to the towns and smaller settlements where dwelt many of Rome's provincial subjects. In many cities walls, gates and towers survived, but for a city to contemplate the expensive irrelevance of new walls and gates, probably in rivalry with its neighbours, was not likely to have been regarded favourably by the imperial authorities. The imperial capital itself had long spread beyond the walls built in the fourth century ac to ward off the raids by Gauls, described in the noble pages of Livy's *Historiae*. Unwalled Rome, along with countless other cities in the empire, was, albeit unconsciously, imitating the famous example of Greek Sparta, whose citizens in arms would challenge any invader of their territory long before he could approach the unwalled city. It was perhaps a permissible exaggeration by the public orator, paying tribute to Rome in the reign of the good Antoninus Pius, to extol the universal prosperity of the cities, safe within the protective wall of the emperor's armies stationed far away in remote provinces. Wars were distant memories and many could hardly credit that they ever occurred at all.

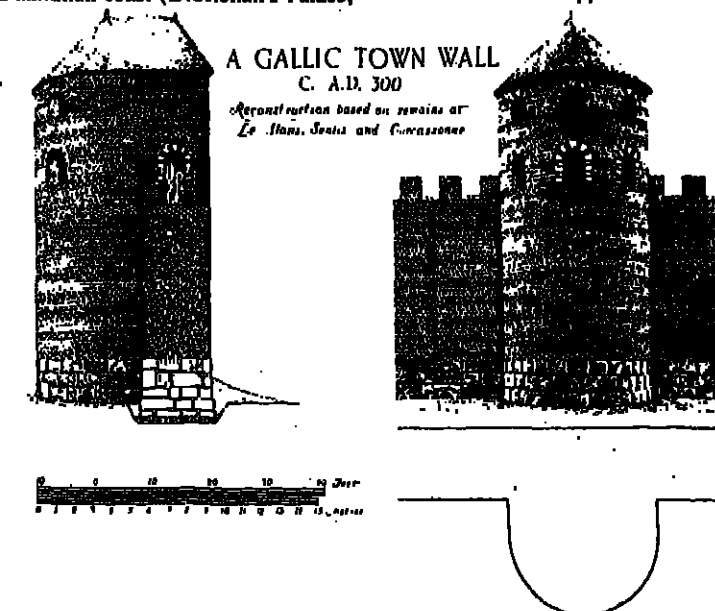
A few places still perhaps needed the protection of walls. In the time of Augustus, when the Roman army had no use for fortifications save a minimum level of earth-banks and timber palisades around its winter depots, colonies of ex-soldiers settled on the fringes of Northern Italy (Aosta, Turin and Ljubljana), in Southern Gaul (Nîmes, Autun and Vienna) and Spain (Barcelona), were provided with well-built stone walls and towers. In some cases, as in the case of the veterans' colonies settled by Claudius at Colchester in newly conquered Britain could not withstand the onslaught of the rebels under Bonduca. Blame for this disaster, observes Tacitus, lay with provincial governors who neglected the needs of defence in favour of amenities; and with the colonists themselves, who took no steps to construct a rampart or ditch: "devoid of precautions as though in time of peace they allowed themselves to be surrounded by a huge force of barbarians".

Stephen Johnson's splendid book describes the transformation of the unfortified empire, after barbarian invasions in the late third century AD, into a state whose government, cities, soldiers, and communications were protected by massive stone defences. Every shape and size. From the North Sea to the Black Sea, the Rhine and Danube were held by a chain of frontier defence consisting of large fortresses, smaller forts, garrisoned watchtowers, observation posts and fortified landing jetties. Along both sides of the Channel large new forts were built on inlets to counter the increasing threat from seaborne raiders. The novelty of their: thick stone walls, narrow gates and projecting towers for archers and artillery, can still be sensed by the visitor to such places as Burgh Castle near Great Yarmouth, Richborough near Sandwich, Portchester near Portsmouth, and the reconstructed Cardiff Castle. In the European provinces most of the major cities soon acquired walls, as did also numerous small settlements along major roads and, perhaps more slowly, many hill-tops were fortified as refuges, especially in the hills behind the Rhine frontier and in the northern and eastern fringes of the Alps. It was a colossal effort of construction and the burdens which it imposed upon the provincial populations must have been nearly insupportable. Biggest of all were the defences ordered for the imperial capital by the emperor Aurelian in AD 271. The wall, built in brick-clad concrete by the guilds of the city, was nearly four metres thick and nearly eight metres high. The circuit of eight kilometres had eighteen gates

and 381 projecting towers. The largest single building project of antiquity, its great blank surfaces, brooding over the frantic traffic of modern Rome, still convey that sense of insecurity which ended centuries of confident urban growth.

Through numerous plans and maps (though with a rather disappointing selection of illustrations, where some aerial views might have been instructive) Dr Johnson first catalogues and offers classifications of the new designs in fortification. Thus gates are divided by the variety of projecting towers which flanked them, U-shaped, square or rectangular and polygonal. That the last category should comprise examples from the Dalmatian coast (Diocletian's Palace,

the reigning sons of Constantine (AD 337-40) proclaim that "the place on the frontier line almost most tempting to the aggressive instincts of the Gothic peoples the emperors have shut off through the construction of fortifications for this depot so as to ensure the everlasting security of their provinces and they have also restrained the attacks of local brigands through an arrangement of permanent defence works". Similar proclamations have been found attached to even the most modest constructions on the banks of the Rhine and Danube. Within the empire some cities were helped to construct their walls by the emperors, for reasons which are not always clear to us. Otherwise self-help and local initiative appears to have

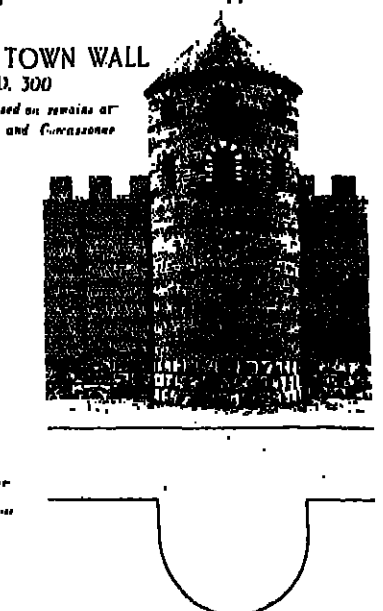


A reconstruction drawing of a Gallic town wall, based on surviving examples at Le Mans, Sens, and Carcassonne: from the book reviewed here.

Split and Salona), Switzerland (Windisch), the Belgian coast (Oudenburg) and the Severn estuary (Cardiff) demonstrates that one cannot distinguish them by region or even by the function of what was being defended. This, and much more besides, is clearly demonstrated by the six principal chapters, which describe the fortifications province by province and site by site (towns and cities; the Rhine; Danube and North Sea frontiers; the defence of Italy and Spain and the hill-top refuges). As can be seen in Britain at London, Colchester and Canterbury, late Roman defences remained in use throughout the Middle Ages. With little modification, they remained as effective as they had been when first built, until the arrival of gunpowder.

The peoples who invaded the empire in the late third century, Franks, Alemanni, Burgundians and above all the Goths, possessed little or no skill in besieging walled forts and towns, and seemingly no inclination to acquire it. Even the Roman army of the time had little to offer against resolute defenders: in the civil war of 238 Aquileia held off the army of the emperor Maximinus. A generation earlier Byzantium held out against the Severans for more than two years. After the citizens had been starved into submission the ruined city looked to the contemporary historian "as if it had been captured by some other people rather than by the Romans".

Yet, as Johnson explains, there remains so much about these fortifications that we do not understand. Their essential purpose is obvious: to protect whatever was within from any known form of attack. Furthermore, they clearly advertised that most sinister of all military euphemisms—"defence in depth", by which the countryside was surrendered in the face of invasion from outside (and no doubt also of any major threat from dissidents within) the empire. It is when one tries to understand the precise purpose of this or that defended place that difficulties arise. Who and what were protected in the fashion of the frontier? The building inscriptions from military installations advertise their purpose in a fashion almost unknown before the third century. At a site on the lower Danube



A reconstruction drawing of a Gallic town wall, based on surviving examples at Le Mans, Sens, and Carcassonne: from the book reviewed here.

been responsible for the defences of many cities, after the example of Athens, that much favoured University town. After the nightmare of an attack by the Heruli in 267 the citizens set to and built a wall of stones taken from existing buildings to enclose the Acropolis and some Roman buildings to the north, but not its historic agora.

Elsewhere the story may have been different, though the result, in respect of the areas enclosed within the new walls, was similar to the Athenian effort. The cities of Gaul had grown in prosperity in the centuries of peace since Caesar's conquest. When the Germans poured across the Rhine in 275-6 most of the cities were unprotected, though the precise extent and nature of the ensuing disaster remains hard to gauge. It does seem clear, however, that after this invasion many of the cities in Gaul were provided with walls, with narrow gates and projecting towers in the latest fashion. They were well built with a solid core faced with freshly cut small stone blocks and an extensive use of brick for window-arches and bonding courses. In several places the walls were built upon a base of larger stones, many removed from earlier buildings. The surviving remains suggest that there was a concerted programme of defence construction, particularly in northern and central Gaul. What is most striking is that many of these new walls enclosed only a small area at the centre of the existing city. Sometimes the theatre and amphitheatre were deliberately brought into the circuit to serve as monumental fortresses. It may be that these Gallic cities (for that is what many of them are) could serve as a refuge for the city population when danger threatened; but one must agree with Johnson that the effort and organization which caused them to be scored through the central blocks of large cities was the consequence of an imperial order that the essential fabric of government must be safeguarded. The political and social consequences are likely to have been more lasting and profound than the effects of the invasions which brought them into existence.

If the principal officers of local and central government could, like the army, bolt into the protection of a secure fortress then who was there to give thought for the rest, not to

mention the rural peasantry? Once the reliance upon walls had permeated the policies and attitudes of the governing classes then all the other groups in society will have determined to seek their own security in similar fashion. Soon not only the major centres were walled but also many small settlements along the principal roads were similarly protected to ensure security of movement between the major centres of government. It is not unreasonable to see in the hill-top fortifications, none of which is known to have been an "official" construction, a counter to the protection of cities and main roads by those who, by reason of status or geography, were left outside the walls. For those who dwelt in the settled areas behind the Rhine and Danube the new policy of selective fortification must have appeared a cynical capitulation from the ideal of the Pax Romana described by Aristides a century before.

The resulting ubiquity of local defences, which is the most notable characteristic of the Roman Empire of the late third and fourth centuries, is well demonstrated in this comprehensive archaeological survey. Not the least of the book's merits are the many questions of purpose Johnson poses and the gaps in our knowledge he reveals. What actually did go on inside some of these fortresses, both military and civil? That distinction itself is hard to make, especially when there is an absence of instructive internal buildings. Who was permitted to enter and who was not? Disappointingly, the author offers little by way of wider historical consideration after his great labour of compilation. A concluding chapter promises something on "social reaction" and "grass-roots response" to the spread of fortification but we are soon presented with the highly questionable pronouncement that the provision of town and city-walls within the empire "was a great boost to Roman morale". The work then concludes with a chronological summary of fortification construction during the late third and fourth

centuries: all very useful but rather predictable after the detailed surveys of individual provinces and frontiers.

The construction of lasting defences was not completed through a short spell of intensive effort. As we can see from several overhauls of the walls of Rome in the fourth and early fifth centuries, repairs and improvements were a continual burden on the local population. As long as the emperors, their courts and the landowning families came to the frontier provinces and needed the protection of defences, the walls could serve to preserve much of the fabric of Roman provincial society. By the early fifth century, with the emperor Honorius safe behind the marshes which surround Ravenna, the Germans crossed the Rhine once again, but this time, like the Goths who crossed the Danube a generation earlier, they were not made to return. Now many sought the security of a hill-top refuge, probably under the protection of some local leader, as much against the rapacity of government officials as against barbarian raids. The most remarkable retreat is commemorated by an inscription carved in the rock of a defile which led to an upland valley in the Maritime Alps near Sisteron. Along with his wife and brother, Claudius Postumus Dardanus had a road cut through the gorge and fortified the place with walls and gates for the common protection of local people. Dardanus, a pious Christian, named the place "God's City" (*Theopolis*). A talented lawyer who had risen to high imperial office in the West, he had already devised his mountain retreat before he received, in AD 414, from St Jerome a long letter of instruction regarding the Promised Land. That great scholar of the Scriptures once observed that the Romans of old, though they believed themselves to be immortal, built in modest fashion, but that those of his day put up buildings to last for ever even though they expected death tomorrow. The peculiar truth of this claim can now be fully understood through the late Roman fortifications described in Stephen Johnson's book.

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OWEN CHADWICK

Hensley Henson: A study in the friction between Church and State 337pp. Oxford University Press. £18.50. 0 19 826445 3

Among Anglican churchmen of the present century Herbert Hensley Henson was outstanding as preacher and orator, as controversialist and man of conscience and as one whose gifts of wit and learning were blended with the sympathy and understanding of a pastor. In his old age, with failing judgment, he published three large volumes of *Retrospect*, and friends who had known him best felt that these volumes gave a distorted picture through passages of irritable self-justification and caustic criticism of contemporaries. Indeed R. A. Butler, who had admired Henson and learnt much from him, went so far as to say "the autobiography shattered my admiration for the man". A biography has long been needed and Owen Chadwick has given us one in which *Retrospect* is set in the perspective of much firsthand testimony about the man and of a wider historical context. There cannot be many biographies in which the story of the man and the history of his times more fascinatingly illustrate one another.

The story begins with a childhood unhappy and frustrated. The mother died in Herbert's infancy, the father was a fanatical sectarian determined to bring up the children uncontaminated by the taints of the world. No fun, no friendships, no school education. So Herbert grew up lonely and thwarted, but devoted to books. When he was thirteen his father married again and the stepmother, a German lady named Carlissima, cared for Herbert, enabled him to go to school, though not a good one, and eventually to go up to Oxford as a non-collegiate undergraduate. Herbert lived very lonely in his lodgings, but he worked hard and won a First Class in the Honours School of History, and a Fellowship at All Souls followed. Indeed life began for him with, for the first time, the happy companionship of friends and colleagues, including some who were to be eminent as statesmen, divines and academics. Christian influences, of a kind very different from his father's, stirred Henson at the time, and among these was Charles Gore at Pusey House. Ordination followed, and very soon the post of Vicar of Barking, where Henson had some strenuous years of pastoral work. It was work of a broadly Tractarian kind, without ritualism but with the teaching and practice of sacramental confession

which meant much to Henson at the time. The turn of the century had seen the first of the big changes of outlook which occurred in Henson's ministry. He had come to a deep dislike of the Catholic conception of the Church, whether Roman or Anglican, partly through the process of his own studies and partly through revulsion at the Dreyfus episode. So when in 1900 Lord Salisbury nominated him to be Canon of Westminster and Rector of St Margaret's on the strength of his now considerable gifts as a preacher, he entered upon a vigorous preaching ministry in which two themes were prominent: fraternity with the Nonconformist Churches, and a liberal interpretation of the Creed such as did not regard the literal acceptance of the virgin birth and the empty tomb as essential for belief in the divinity of Jesus. It was a powerful ministry not afraid to step into contemporary prophecy, as when Henson denounced by name the directors of the Peruvian Amazon Company for the horrible cruelties practised on those who worked for the rubber trade in Peru. Rejecting Asquith's offer of the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in Oxford, Henson completed twelve years at Westminster, and moved on to be Dean of Durham from 1912 to 1918. The North was new to him and he quickly got its "feel" and never lost it, while he continued the same main themes of preaching and teaching, adding to them the righteousness of the Allied cause in the war with warnings against jingoism and a spirit of revenge, and throughout maintaining his conviction that the state establishment of the Church of England should be upheld as in the past.

The story of the "Hereford Scandal" has been written, judiciously by Archbishop Davidson's biographer, and with some emotion in Henson's *Retrospect*. Chadwick gives a deeper and wider picture of the attitudes and motives of those involved in the controversy as well as an interesting glimpse of Lloyd George's crude handling of church matters, for example not writing letters of the highest importance himself but delegating them to the secretary who a little later became notorious in connection with the sale of honours.

Lloyd George was right in believing that Henson should be a bishop, but was the man of Barking and Westminster best choice for the very rural see of Hereford? The nomination caused a storm on account of Henson's alleged heresy concerning the Creed, the protest being led by Bishop Gore of Oxford. Promoted by the Archbishop, Henson wrote a "statement" in which he affirmed his sincere acceptance of the Creed, the protest was withdrawn and Henson's consecration followed; but he was deeply wounded by the controversy and many bishops absented themselves from the ceremony. Through the subsequent years Henson remained a convinced believer in the divinity of Jesus Christ and a powerful exponent of that doctrine, while he claimed that his assent to the two creedal miracles was in symbolic and not literal terms. After two happy years in the see of Hereford, Henson was translated to Durham in 1920, and for twenty years the signature "Herbert Duncum" was known far and wide.

In the 1920s Henson was surrounded in Durham by the miseries of industrial unrest, and he reacted by a very caring and active sympathy for people in distress and a vehement hostility to the weapon of the strike and to "socialism". The first of these attitudes was proved by his own vigorous attempts to bring and encourage relief to the distressed, the second was rewarded by the image of a bigoted capitalist. Henson suffered much and, as was often seen, won both abuse and affection.

Distance meant that Henson's attendance at the House of Lords was infrequent. But he made there a series of memorable and trenchant speeches. Chadwick probes most interestingly into Henson's modes of oratory. While he conscientiously insisted on writing every word of his sermons in full, his best speeches in the Lords and elsewhere were often made when he was ill-prepared or had lost his notes. He supported A. P. Herbert's bill for the reform of the law of divorce, claiming that the reform would "relieve a great many broken homes, and enable many children to enjoy a domestic life", and "enable many children to enjoy a domestic life", and "enable many children to enjoy a domestic life". The biography shows Henson not as one who rapidly and dramatically changed his mind but as thinking critically about his own beliefs, and sometimes after much silent rethinking taking the world by surprise.

The later years of the Durham episcopate saw Henson drawing much upon early experiences and convictions. The Barking vicar seemed to be coming into his own. Henson criticized with horror the evangelistic movement led by Frank Buchman and known as the Oxford Group, with its practice of public confession and sharing. He felt that the methods were dangerous and that such eccentricities showed the need for the Church to have a deeper hold upon its own spirituality and pastoral tradition. While he still disliked contemporary Anglo-Catholicism he found himself near once again to some of the Tractarian ideals and, as in his early ministry, he commended the practice of private confession and absolution. Of his many writings, neither the volumes of sermons nor the *Gifford Lectures*, *Christian Morality*, have lasted beyond his lifetime, though the two books of Charges to those to be ordained, *Church and Parson in England* and *De Clerum*, seem sure of a lasting place in Anglican literature. On no part of his episcopal office did Henson give more care than the selecting, knowing and advising of the candidates for ordination, for the practice of delegating this part of the bishops' office to committees, in theory advisory and in practice dictatorial, had not yet begun. When Henson retired from the bishopric at the age of 75, the diocese thanked him for "a great and generous episcopate".

The story ends with the years of retirement in a Suffolk village, after a very brief period as a Canon of Westminster once again, at the time when the bombs were falling. In his rural retirement some failures of judgment caused the *Retrospect* to contain something of earlier mental agonies and deprecations of other men. Failing health, however, did not prevent him from taking charge of the parish and its services for a whole year; and looking back at some of the country parsons whom he admired greatly he would think specially of Dean Church. His wife Eber and their devoted friend Fernie cared for him. Henson was regarded as the "odd man out" Henson is seen, in Owen Chadwick's biography, as one who consistently strove to find Christian answers in a world "odd and out".

On these and other political issues Henson's attitudes were fairly consistent and predictable. The volte-face, which startled so many, was on the issue of Church and State after the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons in 1927. Between the vote in the Commons on September 17, 1927, and Henson's accession to the University of Cambridge on January 24, 1928, the stoutest upholder of Establishment had become the Disestablisher, the role in which he continued rather lonely for the rest of his life. Here, while many have been perplexed, Chadwick is illuminating. He shows that it was sometimes Henson's way, while upholding a particular conviction, to be thinking deeply and self-critically about its validity, delaying a change of stance until he was really sure. In this case Henson had been quietly wondering whether the union of Church and State could survive the coming of a society largely secularized in attitude, and he was naively ready to suppose that "letting" and "secular" were together. The biography shows Henson not as one who rapidly and dramatically changed his mind but as thinking critically about his own beliefs, and sometimes after much silent rethinking taking the world by surprise.

chapter concerned: re-establish the allegorical interpretation of scripture by which Old Testament prophets were speaking of Christian revelation, full stop. Eliot's principle allows a modern Jewish or atheist interpretation just as much as an orthodox Christian one. And this is not made clear.

Louth uses arguments which favour traditions to endorse one tradition exclusively. And that transforms pleading into special pleading. It distorts his view of historical criticism. He sees it as an obsession with method, an ingratiating aping of science. He fails to do justice to its attempt to do intellectual justice to the other religions, cultures and theologies brought into view by the expansion of Europe and the lengthening historical perspective. To take one of his examples: there may have been no modern discoveries about the New Testament, though it is a big claim and almost certainly false; but there have been discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls which show New Testament ideas vigorously alive elsewhere than in the Church, and that does something irreparable to the old notion of their uniquely revealed holiness in Christianity. Louth notices the "historical biblical critics' enthusiasm for the past". Though they are so like him in this respect, he still cannot forgive them. For they saw "all ages as equally important, equally immediate to God", and he sees such immediacy in much more restricted focus; temporally and spatially. Also, they were ready to criticize all traditions alike and find "widespread holiness in them", a detachment which Louth disavows: "seeing them all as false". Their appreciation

of the past does not excuse them because it included negative criticism of the Christian past. Nor does their fervour for *Bildung* (which Louth also shares), in historical writing or *Bildungsroman*. Could a modern Christian historian seriously take the Acts of the Apostles as a paradigm of his art? What would a miracle do to Emma?

This book is a defence of miracle, mystery and authority, a bouquet for the Grand Inquisitor. If Louth had shown more sense of the virtues of his enemies, not least their intellectual charity, it might have been something more useful. As it is, it suffers from a missing link in its vivid reasoning. No persuasive reason is given for commandeering arguments for traditions in general on behalf of one tradition only. In a plural religious world, that is a serious omission which no exhortations to trusting submission to orthodox dogma can cover.

Two hundred years ago, J. J. Griesbach changed the direction of New Testament studies by suggesting a comprehensive solution to the problem posed by the similarities and differences between the first three Gospels. He proposed that Matthew was written first, Luke next, in dependence on Matthew, and Mark last, using both the others. For the next hundred years, this theory has been wholly out of fashion and Marcan priority has ruled, but recently it has won powerful scholarly support. In *The Revival of the Gospel Hypothesis* (255pp. Cambridge University Press, £18.00 £21.25pb £10.00pb) Christopher Tuckett gives a critical survey of the movement and finds Griesbach waiting.

The fruits of putrefaction

Anne Duchêne

JOANNA RICHARDSON

Colette 276pp. Methuen. £12.95. 0413 48780 6

Joanna Richardson says in the introduction to *Colette* that her book is "the first full-scale biography of Colette in English". The jacket calls it "the first serious full-scale biography of Colette to be written in English". This is presumably to establish its distance from such smaller studies as those by Elaine Marks, Margaret Crookland and Yvonne Mitchell, who could not make such claims, though they did try to establish some degree of critical perspective, which this book refrains from doing. What "scale" is being used? It is an odd word, and bothersome.

There seem to be two reasons for the claim. One is the "practical help" Richardson received, in conversation and letters, from Colette's two stepsons, Bertrand de Jouvenel; the son by his first marriage of Colette's second husband, Henri de Jouvenel (here called "Henry"), though no other names are Anglicized, and Renaud de Jouvenel, Henri's natural son by one of his mistresses, the Comtesse de Comminges. "They have, between them," the introduction gratefully records, "added a new dimension to this book."

Bertrand de Jouvenel, now over eighty, admits having become his stepmother's lover in 1920, when he was seventeen and she was forty-seven. ("There has long been a tradition in France that young men are initiated by their mother's friends," the author explains.) *Chéri* was published in 1920, but before their meeting. The relationship lasted three years, until the de Jouvenel divorce. It is never recalled here with anything but gentleness, admiration and gratitude; and the biographer's tone also softens; whenever this is her witness.

By contrast, the memories of Renaud de Jouvenel, in his late seventies, are in harsh dissenting counterpoint to the prevailing mythology: earth-mother she may have seemed to others, but she remembers Colette as a rotten wife, a rotten mother to her only daughter, a

loyal and modest man; and last, the arthritic apothosis in the rue de Beauparis, with a *mar-serviteur*, the "admirable and adorable" Maurice Goudéket.

A sense of any "scale" is very soon lost, in all this, for the ordinary reader who must, in a book as devotedly documented as this one, either decide whether to concentrate hard on the elusive central current in the life, or to succumb to all the crackling and rustling and distraction of the quotations. (Distraction is compounded, of course, when those quoted are predominantly French literati, culturally groomed to be aspiring and self-aware, and so never making entirely reliable witnesses; the funniest tributes at the end almost carry the book away on a high tide of hyperbole, from which one would like to rescue Colette's salute to "a wise woman who... refused none of the fruitful putrefactions of life", and whose fame grew "slowly and obscurely, as on the straw of a manger.") Colette emerges most clearly in the 1930s, when she was standing alone in her maturity and fame, but was always very worried about money. The great talent was then turned to writing all kinds of publicly material for cigarettes and wines and cosmetics, and the subtitles for American films, and "other brushwood which helps me to kindle my fire", as she herself put it. What one critic called her "terrible love of money" ("it's because I abominate it that I want to shut up as much of it as possible"), she told her publisher) can be ascribed, Richardson agrees, to childhood experience of thrift and her father's ruin; but she also needed money simply to maintain the houses by the sea, the fruits, the wines, the flowers and the animals which restored her, like Anteaue, to earth.

The reader may still, if hot for "full-scale" certainties, find himself with many questions. Some are small: why, for instance, is Léon Hamel, the early consort, so shadowy? Why no allusion to the suicide of Colette's sister? More widely, how did the collaboration work with Léo Marchand, in transferring the novels to the stage? How was *Chéri* distributed, for instance, among four acts, without benefit of the sustaining prose? Why does the author never advance her own (or any) general view of the evolution of Parisian society during Colette's

eighty years? Why does she say Colette's reactions to the fall of France in 1940 are "strangely unmoved and unmoving" but not allow us to see any, when so much that is trivial is so abundantly recorded? (Even, a querulous nationalist query: if Willy's illegitimate son Colette's third stepson, loving and overlooked, was certain her only visit to England, to see him in school, coincided with Mafeking night in 1900, why did Colette later tell Peter Quennell her only English visit was to a haunted castle by the Thames, and James Lees-Milne that it was as guest of an Anglo-Indian colonel who only spoke to his dog, and then in French?)

None of which, in relation to the books we have, matters a jot. The unity of Colette's life lies in her writing; but this is not a critical biography, and never seeks to analyse that essence. This is sad, because it is in the writing that Colette seems, paradoxically, most natural, and honest, and least an artefact of the subtle, narcissistic pressures of Parisian publicity which exalted her into a *moussie sacrée*. She fell in with these pressures with keen compliance, and played the serpent of old Sene with gusto, of course; but her peculiar potency lies always, however perversely or unexpectedly, in the assertion of health and goodness, over and against and beyond putrescence.

The logic of decadence

Marina Warner

MICHEL TOURNIER

Gilles et Jeanne 416pp. Paris: Gallimard. 49 fr. 2 07 024269 2

Gilles de Rais was about twenty-five in 1429 when Joan of Arc arrived in Chinon; he had pledged himself that year to the party of Georges de la Tremoille, then the favourite at court, and had been created, in spite of his youth, Marshal of France. He was the heir to immense fortunes from large estates in Brittany and Vendée, amassed by his grandfather, the miser and ruffian Jean de Craon, whose only son had fallen at Agincourt. With the Duc d'Alençon, Gilles de Rais was given command of the armies at Orléans, in the spring campaign that led to victory over the English besiegers, and made Joan of Arc the champion and saviour of France.

In August, Gilles rode with the King and Joan through Champagné to the coronation in Reims: cathedral; it was here that he brought the Holy Chalice in the Sainte Ampoule to the ceremony, from its shrine in the Abbey of Saint Rémy. Later, during Joan of Arc's unsuccessful attempt to press the war policy, he remained her ally. They fought together, to storm Paris in September, but failed when neither the King nor the inhabitants gave them the support they had hoped for. When Joan fell, wounded in the thigh, in the month that had been filled in for the saint, she called on Gilles's name to help her; or so one of the chroniclers writes. It was Gilles who suggested

a raid deep into English territory, perhaps to rescue her after she had been captured, but this is not certain. The mystery play held in Orléans four years after her death celebrated the town's heroine with lavish display and was paid for - at huge cost - by Gilles, who also figured in it very prominently and well. He was a profligate who, once he had come into his inheritance, spent so fantastically that the King placed him under an interdict; in an era of extreme refinement and aristocracy combined with ruthlessness, he presented a characteristic mixture of aestheticism (he kept a boy's choir and patronized music fervently), of piety (he endowed churches and convents, generously), and of course cruelty. For Gilles de Rais is most notorious as a prototype of Bluebeard. The Opies have traced this folk tale back to an earlier source, also Breton, and it may well have influenced local perceptions of Gilles de Rais's crimes in his time, as well as the tradition that developed about him later. Today, the tomb of his daughter Marie, in Notre-Dame de Vitre, is still pointed out to visitors as that of Bluebeard's child.

That Saint Joan of Arc should have accepted as congenial, perhaps even as a friend, a man who nine years after she died in 1431 confessed to the sexual violation and murder of over a hundred children and was hanged and burned after an inquisition trial more sober than her own, constitutes a historical surprise that has inspired many writers. Michel Tournier, in this new, very slim *résumé*, follows the known biographical facts with surprising fidelity, but fulfils the promise of his publishers to read between the lines by giving them a decadent *appétit*. Where previous

authors have seen paradox in Joan of Arc's association with Bluebeard, Tournier sees a certain logic. His Joan is responsible for Gilles de Rais.

Tournier despatches the living Joan in a brisk forty pages. Gilles sees her at Chinon, and experiences a *coup de foudre*. She is everything he has always desired, a young boy who is at the same time a woman (and one with green eyes) and a saint, haloed in light. They become friends, after she has described her visions and her mission in words taken straight from the trial. When Joan falls before Paris, Gilles seals his absolute allegiance to her with a kiss - a lingering kiss - on her wound. He wonders already where the fire that he feels emanate from her comes from, God or the Devil. Either way, he is her man, he says, since he has now taken communion of her blood.

Tournier's Gilles possesses profound spiritual yearnings, but when Joan is condemned as limb of the fiend (as the Duke of Bedford called her), Gilles is "thrown" into disequilibrium. If she belongs to the Devil, he must too. He follows her to Rouen, and - in one of Tournier's few invented incidents - watches her being put to death at the stake. The sight unhinges him, and from then on, he will "metamorphose" malignly, he will "unfurl his wings as an angel of hell." (Tournier somehow manages to be concise and overblown at once.) The evidence of his trial and Breton folklore provide the author with material for his protagonist's satanism, unadorned, "third" person here. His now-saturated himself, too, with the intriguing historical character of François Prelati, an Italian astronomer, who like many others in France

at that time, sought employment in a nobleman's court.

Prelati promised Gilles that his familiar, the demon Barron, would reveal the Devil himself to Gilles if he sacrificed enough victims. Prelati is here portrayed as a dandy, an alchemist and a spoiled priest, dedicated to the pursuit of evil-doing as good. He is as graceful and beautiful as the Gрозzi frescoes we are reminded were being painted at that date. He also looks uncannily like Joan, so that Gilles cannot resist placing his destiny in his hands. At the conclusion of the *résumé*, Prelati, who has been testifying against Gilles, suggests that like Joan he will now become a saint, purified by fire and repentance. Tournier evinces no interest in the hypothesis that Gilles de Rais was framed for financial and political considerations; such innocence as Tournier attributes to him is an inverted, satanic idealism.

Tournier evokes vividly the gloomy and desolate landscape of the Atlantic coast of Vendée, and the grim medieval fortresses of Gilles's life; he can bring bestial gluttony so close the reader can almost smell the hell's kitchens he describes. But this *résumé* is a disappointment, from the author of that rich fantasy on the theme of the Kings *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and the variation on Robinson Crusoe, *Vendredi*. In those novels, he partly used first-person voices; a form that suits his laconic style of utterance; better, than the unadorned "third" person here. His now-saturated himself, too, with the intriguing historical character of François Prelati, an Italian astronomer, who like many others in France

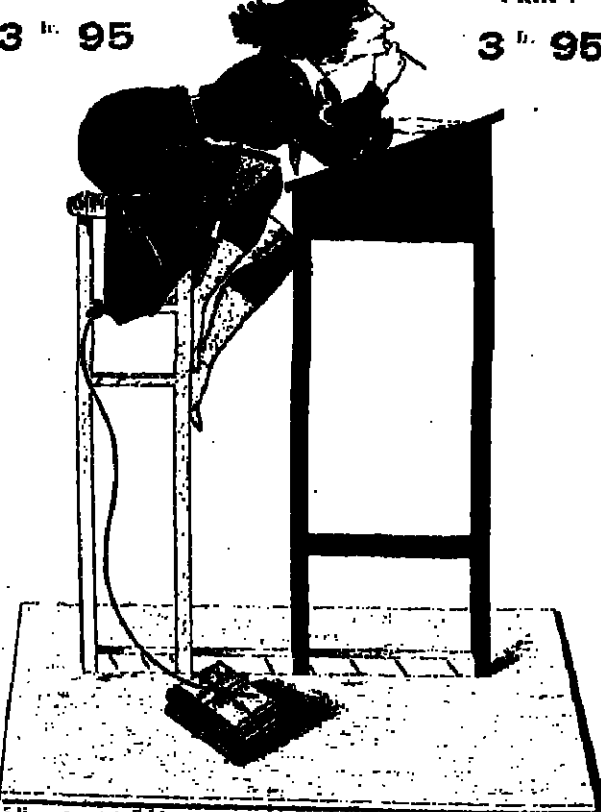
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Colette caricatured in wood (dressed and made up), advertised for sale in La Vie Parisienne, May 9, 1908 as one of seventeen such models.

hardly new, but was expressed by Huysmans in his version of Gilles de Rais, *La-bas*: "La fréquentation de Jeanne d'Arc a certainement suralimenté ses élans vers Dieu. Or, du mysticisme exalté au satanisme exaspéré, il n'y a qu'un pas. Dans l'au-delà tout se touche."

This *fin de siècle* rubric, spiced with fashionable interest in sadomasochism and underlying consent to the intellectual status of Sade as a great psychologist, has simply been accepted, and not explored in *Gilles et Jeanne*. Not one of the characters, Gilles, Prelati, and certainly not Jeanne, has any aspect of their spiritual - or carnal - make-up described with the complexity needed to support the rather empty conceit that just as Lucifer was the greatest of the angels, so, in the beyond, "tout se touche."

Gilles et Jeanne might appear less thin, and less derivative, if the spectre of a far greater predecessor did not fall across its few pages. Georges Bataille, himself greatly curious about perversion, wrote a brilliant study of Gilles de Rais, in the introduction to his edition of the trial. In this text, Bataille saw Gilles de Rais's excesses as the terminal convulsions of the feudal aristocracy, equipped by culture and economics only to violent deeds, and cruel pleasures. Though even Bataille did not manage to find the personal wellspring of such enormities as Gilles de Rais committed, he illuminated the times that nurtured the man. Tournier does not take us any further. He is content for his characters to pass by in a prettily decorative frieze, as if in a *tableau vivant* performed in a brothel catering for a clientele with special tastes.

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commentary

Compromises in the Peak

John Hale

The Buxton Festival

Irresistible, the idea seemed: to leave a capital plague-stricken with greasy humidity, clamps and juke-music for the pastoral uplands of England's loftiest town and the more rarefied entertainments offered by the fifth Buxton Summer Festival, whose literary theme this year was the *Decameron*. Three-and-a-half hours to its realization; not so much more than the time it took in 1348 for Boccaccio's young men and women to climb from the Florence of physical and moral breakdown to their own joyful and decorously structured festival in the uplands of Fiesole. Yet despite a taut nineteenth-century crescent and pretty Edwardian opera house (restored with local money but on an outsider's insistence), Buxton is a bland town with an air of being put-up rather than privileged by its festival.

There were two operas, Vivaldi's *Griselda* and Gounod's *La Colombe*. (Both, fortunately, are coming to Sadler's Wells in late September and October.) The story of *Griselda* is the last in the *Decameron*, and its Franciscan emphasis on devoted humility serves notice on the listening company of young women that their holiday from conventional mores is over. Manipulating an earlier libretto by Apostolo Zeno, Goldoni broadens the stage interest with additional characters whose various amatory passions have a happy effect not of distracting from *Griselda*'s long-suffering, if undramatic, love, but of throwing it – and thus the problem of its interpretation – into even greater relief. The challenge was met with an utterly convincing strength and dignity, as well as great beauty of voice, by Cynthia Buchan.

This is *opera seria* in spite of its happy ending. How could it be cheered up for Buxton's catchment area? The producer, Malcolm Fraser, had the idea of punctuating its scenes with a revival of the *intermezzi* that were commonly employed in Vivaldi's Venice to offer comic relief and, at times, helpful, humanizing comment on the serious plot. This was an imaginative and entirely justifiable notion. But the *intermezzi* failed to enrich the experience as a whole. The idiom of mime and elaborate visual gags interspersed with madrigals (here, as elsewhere, the Festival's policy was: in doubt, sing a madrigal) was ill-served by the group chosen to perform them. I have experienced few more alienating experiences on entering an opera house than the sight of a monk-clown hauling on a bell-rope and miming ingratiatingly at the audience as they settle into place.

It would be unfair to call Mr Fraser's production a compromise; it preserved Vivaldi intact and the *intermezzi* at least stimulated debate. *La Colombe*, on the other hand, with only Gounod's

swaying, lyrical music raised in constant protest, was dragged bodily from 1860 on to a junk-strewn squat in 1983, its drearily retardataire flower-person hero kept up to the mark by his punk girl-boy servant, its dialogue brisk with the nonce-words of the Zanibar Club. The effect of Stuart Burge's production was wholly delightful: a bizarre joy to look at, inventively directed, sung with effective relish. All the same, radically to conceal the historical context of an opera not seen before in this country and unlikely to be revived, is not like updating repertory works. *Rigoletto* can be taken over, and illumined, by the Mafia. It will recur. But to doli up *La Colombe* with a talent that could have been applied equally engagingly to showing how minor Gounod would have appeared to his contemporaries reflects a failure of nerve. Festivals

succulent and winsome "Cymon and Iphigenia" and Holman Hunt's "Isabella"; in the peak of as-good-as-nude health in spite of the obviously well-tear-watered pot of basil she yearns against, this sturdy young person is clearly thinking less of Lorenzo than of a forthcoming liaison with Lord Leighton.

Another event was a programme apparently reeking of compromise: "Boccaccio: bawdy, bowerlized and British". But – thinking away the madrigals that had to follow each item – this series of readings of *Decameron* stories by Gabriel Woolf and Maureen O'Brien was done with such intelligent panache that in spite of the narrowness of the selection, the economy, speedy characterization and narrative zip of the author were triumphantly demonstrated, and the performance



Machinery designed c 1730 by Gillet for the Comédie-Italienne; an illustration from the new edition of The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, edited by Phyllis Hartnoll, to be published on September 8.

need not present rarities en masse. This is no purist's comment on Mr Burge's treatment of Boccaccio. Federico Alberighi's ghastly dilemma was effectively dispersed in Barberis and Carré's suitably contemporary rebelling of the story – which included transforming his falcon into a performing dove.

There was also an exhibition of paintings and prints illustrating *Decameron* themes in the Buxton Museum and Art Gallery. Arranged with affectionate scholarship by Catherine Gordon, it showed how artists were all libertarians at heart, plunging for second-hand sources, twisting the originals to suit the sentiment of the moment. Apart from Angelica Kaufmann's delicious "Gualtherius and Griselda" (Miss Gordon's identification), the most memorable were the most appalling: the nineteenth-year-old Millais's *Etty*

ended with a moving and ingeniously compressed performance of yet another valuable curiosity: Tennyson's play *Falcon*.

Perhaps the most disconcerting moment of all came in the course of one of the readings (ten a day, on the hour, for ten days) of the old *Decameron* tales. At seven o'clock on the day before the Festival ended, that thoroughly metropolitan group *Instant Sunshine*, which includes *Times* writer Miles Kingston, filed in to read the story of Solomon's Advice, the ninth of Day 9. Ostentatiously unprepared, reading in turns and progressively twisting Boccaccio's words to exploit quaint jokes of their own, they brought a whiff of casual philistinism and Xenophobia (those funny Italian names) that made the mild compromises called for by the Festival's commercial dilemma seem more justified: Boccaccio seemed better served by Buxton's calculation than by London's ego.

When it all gets too much for him Red begins to give clandestine free rein to his instincts, whereupon (after a nasty beating by the regiment's tough vigilantes), he discovers that he had nothing to worry about at all: since everyone is homosexual, Red exults, grows reckless, falls prey to the Russians' dirty tricks department, is threatened with exposure, and spends years as a spy in the pay of the enemy (it was the opinion of one contemporary observer that the secrets he betrayed, and those he failed to pass on to his own side – since he is himself a spy-catcher – brought about the downfall of the Empire), falling the while ever deeper into moral turpitude. Found out at last, he is introduced to the Browning pistol; he is invited to do the decent thing, he obliges. Cue for the hypocrisy, at the heart of the social fabric to have its heyday.

Every imaginable form of paranoia imbues the confusions of Osborne's project; we would like to believe, it belonged to Red and his society, but the inescapable sign is that it is also the playwright's. Quers (nothing about Osborne's language makes a less brutalizing term seem appropriate) flourish in a climate of treason, the climate of treason depends on quers for its existence; there is no variety of low behaviour of which foreigners, or the Enemy, are not capable, yet it is merely hypocritical to believe that they

Fear and loathing in Vienna

Alan Jenkins

JOHN OSBORNE

A Patriot for Me

Theatre Royal, Haymarket

Soon after its first production in 1965 *A Patriot for Me* fell foul of the Lord Chamberlain's office, and an article in the *TLS* of March 16, 1967 remarked that the excisions then required of John Osborne (which he refused to make), though not extensive, would have entailed "a total corruption of the play's intention". Both the Lord Chamberlain and the author of the article are to be congratulated on the way in which each pinpoints the essentially flawed nature of the play, at the same time unerringly directing remedial attention away from the point wherein it transgresses. *A Patriot* seems less likely now to deprave and corrupt, but still in need of editing far beyond anything dreamt of when the case for the offence rested on moral rather than aesthetic grounds; it throws up a muddled welter of serious issues, depravity and corruption being little to the fore among them, but very little in the way of coherent intention is discernible in its own peculiar mix of moral fervour and poorly-cloaked prejudice.

Cloaks are in evidence throughout: we are among the military élite of the Habsburg empire, the officer-class of the Austro-Hungarian twilight; all rigid discipline, snobbery, codes of honour spoken and unspoken, comradeship of a kind (a pretty run kind, as it turns out) and the gentleman's three D's: dignity, debauchery and debt. Everyone contrives to stand on the first while getting into the last, which leads on naturally to disagreements and duels. In the first scene a young blade is transfixed by his opponent's blade. He dies in the arms of Red, whose subsequent rise and fall the play charts with a remorseless lack of sympathy.

Red positively swarms with guilty secrets; accordingly he also seethes with repressions, over-compensations and Angst. His biggest guilty secret is that he is homosexual. Haunted by the death of his fellow-officer-cadet (for whom he nursed a Love that Dared Not Speak Its Name) he suffers agonies on his way up through War School, the agonies signalled here by a dreamy remoteness from fellow warriors, a failure to throw himself with the requisite enthusiasm into their favourite relaxation – whoring – and the odd yearning glance at waiters in cafes. There is some heavy-handed irony about the need for a "good marriage" to make his success complete.

When it all gets too much for him Red begins to give clandestine free rein to his instincts, whereupon (after a nasty beating by the regiment's tough vigilantes), he discovers that he had nothing to worry about at all: since everyone is homosexual, Red exults, grows reckless, falls prey to the Russians' dirty tricks department, is threatened with exposure, and spends years as a spy in the pay of the enemy (it was the opinion of one contemporary observer that the secrets he betrayed, and those he failed to pass on to his own side – since he is himself a spy-catcher – brought about the downfall of the Empire), falling the while ever deeper into moral turpitude. Found out at last, he is introduced to the Browning pistol; he is invited to do the decent thing, he obliges. Cue for the hypocrisy, at the heart of the social fabric to have its heyday.

Every imaginable form of paranoia imbues the confusions of Osborne's project; we would like to believe, it belonged to Red and his society, but the inescapable sign is that it is also the playwright's. Quers (nothing about Osborne's language makes a less brutalizing term seem appropriate) flourish in a climate of treason, the climate of treason depends on quers for its existence; there is no variety of low behaviour of which foreigners, or the Enemy, are not capable, yet it is merely hypocritical to believe that they

have the monopoly on lowness; a repressive moral ambience will inevitably drive deviant impulses deep into the dark recesses of the body politic, where they will inevitably fester, yet deviance itself can be equated directly with decadence and decline. No great perception is needed to grasp that something is being said about the state of the nation, our nation, immediately post-Pilby England. The baffling thing is that a playwright with Osborne's undoubted feel for the textures – particularly the linguistic textures – of social milieu should have attempted the "historical" machinery of this play at all.

Neither café-society nor high society strikes one, in this production at least, as remotely Viennese. There is much talk in the historical novel/history lesson vein, as characters enact a rapid exchange of information along Coler's Notes lines, keeping us up to date on "period" developments; there are more portentous exchanges on the nature of duty, marriage, homosexuality and so on, but these are of a quite startling banality. The programme notes inform us that Habsburg Vienna would only brook the raising of a topic if a joke could be made out of it, but there are precious few jokes here.

Nothing in any of it convinces us of anything but a panoply of authorial digusts: with the idea of deviant sex – it is all brutal stuff, despite its taking place in settings of seedy opulence, or the outrageous camp of a drag ball over which Michael Gough queens it not quite majestically enough; with the body in general (handily summed up by an aristocratic Mata Hari figure who, she avers, doubling for a moment as Christine Keeler, "knows all the smelly little ways of men", and by Red himself who vengefully, insistently reminds his coquettish catamites that queers when showing their age "go in the backside"); and with Jews – a remarkable conflation, this, of paranoia about race, class and sexual orientation. Contemptuously anti-Semitic remarks are commonplace, routinely uttered by everyone and it was something of the kind that led to the death-by-duelling of the homosexual (it is hinted, Jewish Siczynski. All this is licensed – raised, almost, to the status of a convention – by the demands of "historical accuracy". But with Red's death comes the revelation of his second biggest guilty secret: he was himself a Jew, nothing other than a desperately driven arriviste; and how appropriate that he should also be the agent of rot. Very little saving "historical" irony is perceptible.

Perhaps Osborne found himself fascinated by the story of Red in a way that would not have been possible with the greayer truths of Philip's *dégradé* – his best plays have relied for their strongest effects on the simple, bold and often moving delineation of a central figure's "Look Back in Anger, *Indiscreet Evidence*, *The Entertainer*...). But it must have been the over-excitement engendered by parallel glimpses, scathing denunciations in the office, which prompted him to the grandiose vulgarities of this play. Its sprawling crudely reductive presentation of troubling realities is troubling, certainly, but troubling for the wrong reasons. Alan Bates, jurching from crisis to crisis, suggests the potential richness of Red's tragedy without succeeding in making him tragic to throw out chin and chest energetically, but most of the time sounds like a raving queen. He is partly, of necessity, all posture and mannerisms: there are one or two gestures towards a complex and vulnerable being, but they carry little conviction. The other military figure, an caricature, again to quote the programme notes, "sometimes" "quits the stage" to "allow the Russians speak in their accents, more suggestive of Afrikaans or Welsh than anything to be heard of the Danube. All too briefly, Harry Andrews as the Cerebral, invests his role with a compelling and finely-judged performance, but he looks as if he had wandered in from another theatre.

Uncommitted acts

David Hirson

MOSS HART and GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

You Can't Take It With You

Lyttelton Theatre

In the mid-1930s, commercial playwrights in America tended to leave bleak subjects of Depression suffering to Union and League dramatists. New Deal polemics which excited audiences at the institutional theatres were generally unwelcome in Broadway houses, but there were a few notable exceptions. Lillian Hellman discovered with *The Little Foxes* (1939) a small-town melodrama in which immigrant Martin Gunther rescues his patron after a bank collapse, did either member of the team allow contemporary events to become more than ornamental. Their seven other collaborations show, at best, a casual concern for the reality of national despair.

You Can't Take It With You has all the trappings of socially responsible Depression comedy. In the course of the evening, three oppressive establishment forces invade Grandpa Vanderhof's household of loony free-livers: an IRS inspector demanding unpaid back-taxes; federal agents on the lookout for budding anarchists; and the Anthony Kirbys, a Wall Street puritan and his wife whose son, Tony, hopes to marry into the Vanderhof clan. Each is flouted in turn by the family's carefree and idiosyncratic behaviour, but the Kirbys are the most mercilessly assailed: bombarded by a chaos of ballet improvisations, xylophone riffs, indoor wrestling and legerdemain, they grudgingly participate in a game of word-association which results in the revelation of Mrs Kirby's unsatisfied sexual lust. These mischievous attacks on authority might seem typical of the

distressingly uneven presentation of the play's strengths.

George S. Kaufman's politics were notoriously vague. Few subscribers to *The New Republic* could peruse it guiltlessly, as he did, over eggs benedict at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. During rehearsals for *Sing Out for the News* (1938), composer Harold Rome bemoaned his partner's apparent lack of ideological commitment; both Kaufman and Hart showed a disturbing willingness to lampoon anything. Only in *The American Way* (1939), a small-town melodrama in which immigrant Martin Gunther rescues his patron after a bank collapse, did either member of the team allow contemporary events to become more than ornamental. Their seven other collaborations show, at best, a casual concern for the reality of national despair.

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The errors of comedy

Stanley Wells

SHAKESPEARE

The Comedy of Errors
Royal Shakespeare Theatre,
Stratford-upon-Avon

It is surprising that so modest a masterpiece as *The Comedy of Errors* should prove as resistant to successful theatrical realization as its stage history suggests, and as the present production – one brilliant – demonstrates. Shakespeare's shortest play, it has frequently been padded out with additional material, from Frederick Reynolds's "operatic" adaptation of 1819 to Trevor Nunn's RSC version of 1976 (which won the Ivor Novello award for the best London musical of 1977). Adrian Noble resists this temptation.

What seems to cause more serious problems is the play's stylistic range. Its tragicomic structure encompasses farce, the comedy of idiosyncratic character, displays of wit, corrective comedy, and the tensions and consolations of romance. Presumably it is neo-classical tendencies in our dramatics that lead them to narrow the play's idiom, generally in favour of farce (a little odd considering that this is Shakespeare's only play to be specifically entitled a "comedy").

This production opens beguilingly. As we enter the auditorium a five-piece band half-visible in a well that has been cut into the thrust stage is playing its 1920s hit tune. The music (by Nigel Hess) is delightful throughout, a different band playing less meretriciously in the fountain in the foyer during the interval (which – according to the programme does not take place). A band in the pit takes us back a quarter of a century to the days when a stage curtain rose and fell. But on the stage itself a semi-circular white set, taking back only the eighth of a century, to Peter Brook's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Shakespeare's play opens seriously, with Egeon's narrative of his shipwreck, but Adrian Noble makes us

confident that the play's title is no deceit by giving us an opening mime which takes us into the world of circus (shades again of Peter Brook) and of silent film. Characters come and go, appear, bowler-hatted, and carrying umbrellas, reading *The Financial Times* (a topical touch on the day of its publication after a lapse caused by industrial inaction), and variously wearing white-face, black-face, blue-face, clown-face, baggy trousers, cloth caps, false noses, masks and ludicrously long shoes. Immediately identifiable is the Duke, in purple robes and gold coronet, straight out of *The Young Vicar*. Egeon (Joseph O'Connor), speaks seriously and well, overcoming the handicap of a blue nose, a clown's make-up, and the exaggerated reactions of his hearers.

As the action develops, the same tendencies recur. The production draws on the traditions of circus, pantomime, musical comedy, silent film, and farce. There is comic policeman on a bicycle (yes, again). Whenever (as often) anyone slaps, hits, or kicks anyone else, his actions are underscored by bumps, thumps, whistles, hooters, and other sonic appointments. A moving platform on which Adriana and Luciana make their entries and exits by descending and ascending recalls the trapeze of Brook's *Dream*; but that production had a narrative clarity and a trust in the dialogue that are lacking here. Admittedly the verbal game of *The Comedy of Errors* is more dated, more obscurely allusive than any in the *Dream*; but the dialogue is worth listening to (if only to discover what is happening) will find it overlaid with a visual game: Antipholus of Syracuse speaks one of his more important speeches hanging upside down from a window; underscored with music: this is a literally melodramatic production in which few of the major speeches are not accompanied throughout, or adorned with labouriously illustrative comic business.

Not all the comedy is obtrusive. There are inventive touches: after Lucius has grabbed "Dromio's" balls through the letterbox of the door, if the name be called Lucius (Lucius), Lucius appears.

Fortcoming new productions at Stratford-upon-Avon include *Measure for Measure*, opening in early October, with Daniel Massey as the Duke; designed by Bob Crowley, it will be directed by Adrian Noble. At the Other Place Volpone will be played by Richard Griffiths in a production by Bill Alexander and Calderon de la Barca's *A Life in a Day* will be directed by John Barton.

era, but Kaufman had been deflating representatives of the business world long before the Crash of 1929 (see, for example, his treatment of Leach in *Dukey*, 1921). Elements which seem to fix *You Can't Take It With You* as a "Depression piece" are often vintage comic situations unbounded by time.

Despite this, the National Theatre is intent upon stressing the play's period aspects. Not only are 1930s phenomena underscored whenever they actually appear in the script – "WPA" by the way, becomes "Works Progress Association" (sic) – but others are invented to rescue the point: a jazz quartet is hauled on stage to back up the cast in a medley of Irving Berlin and Cole Porter songs. Such preoccupation with atmosphere is not necessarily inappropriate, but it becomes so when it takes precedence over more crucial production values.

Grant Hicks's set, for example, a Depression interior meticulously realized down to the cornice and moulding and brie-à-brie is so cavernous that only the most expensive performances (Brewster Mason's Kolenkhov and Margaret Courtenay's Olga Katrina) can come close to filling it. This distorts the play's relationships wildly: characters who should command attention, especially Grandpa Vanderhof, seem dwarfed by their surroundings, while less central but more boisterous roles assume inordinate prominence. The strong sense of family intimacy which Kaufman and Hart specified as essential to *You Can't Take It With You* is lost in the windy spaces of the Lyttelton stage. Consequently, the play sadly dissolves into a series of disconnected wide-cracks whose ability to provoke laughter is largely independent of either speaker or context.

acquires new meaning; and the door itself is the object of admirably entertaining business as it assesses from the shoulders of one Dromio to another without either of them appearing to realize it has moved. Peter McNery brings incisive elegance to Antipholus of Ephesus; as Dromio of Syracuse, Richard O'Callaghan gets deserved laughs by playing his description of the kitchen wench who seeks his favours for verbal effect, and will get better ones when he has refined his timing.

But too often the production method turns the characters into two-dimensional stereotypes. Zoë Wanamaker could be an excellent Adriana were she not reduced to a dowdy shrew. Luciana (Jane Bookier) loses all reality as a pink-frilled circus ballerina with a high, cone-shaped blonde top-knot; any stylization destroys the play's romantic interest. Dr Finch is a mere grotesque, his big scene travestied as usual, this time by being turned into an ill-sung, quasi-operatic set-piece. Joseph O'Connor almost redeems the final scene by the genuineness of his appeal to his unknowing son, but the limited range of the production denies him his full effect.

Clifford Williams directed this play in 1962, also for the RSC, with a relaxed ease which allowed full expression to its varied styles. Comedy was unfurled, proceeding naturally from character: seriousness was not portentous, but provided a proper ground-buss to the joyful conclusion. He showed every sign of being a popular hit, but will do nothing to erode the classical status of Williams's version.

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Quarrels

Andrew Hislop

DUSTY HUGHES

Bad Language

Hampstead Theatre

"Structuralism: revolutionary concept or windbagery?" is one of this year's questions for a Cambridge English prize. *Bad Language*, Dusty Hughes's uneven, if sometimes poignantly witty new play, which is set in a supposedly contemporary structuralism-embattled Cambridge, has been understandably criticized for being in a time warp far removed from the present day. But if Hughes is obviously behind the times about Cambridge, Cambridge is, typically, even more out of date about itself. At least Hughes lacks on a token "post" to this much abused and misused -ism.

Unfortunately, neither this nor other gestures such as a reference to the Falklands, short hair, mixed colleges, historical analysis of the 1960s etc, gives the play a contemporary feel. Change a line or two and *Bad Language* could be set in 1973.

Such archaism does not necessarily imply artistic failure. But *Bad Language* does not have a strong enough dramatic focus to slieve quibbles about its representation of such a well-known institution. And Hughes only invites further carping by making transparent, but not illuminating, references to the much publicized ideological and personal furors which have beset the Cambridge English faculty: Leavis is mutated into an off-stage college rector called Quarrel and Colin MacCabe into another behind-the-scenes character. O'Brien, O'Brien manages somehow to flee to a provincial professorship before the end of term while pleading shingles to gullible students such as Phil (Kev Whately) – who lies abandoned, intellectually if not emotionally, his previous Lawrentian supervisor and lover, the Quarrelsome but even more querulous Bob (Alan Rickman).

Phil's academic progress is unhindered, or even helped, by O'Brien's going provincial. But judging from a practical criticism class in which he confronts Bob's lame gesture towards I. A. Richards, very little structuralism, of any kind, has disturbed his consciousness. His unconscious, however, may have been affected more. Inspired, perhaps, by Barthes's analysis in *S/Z* of a Balzac tale of desire and castration, or Lacan's invocation of the phallus as signifier, he develops a morbid interest in displaying a severed male member.

Bob, who has none of Phil's theoretical or practical interest in the deconstruction of the subject, prefers to make use of the stuff of such symbols which still firmly attached to the human agent. His heart, however, appears to be readily detachable as he cynically and sardonically fills from male to female student, even driving one of his abandoned conquests, Davina (Angela Bell), to leap from a window. Only Sueane (Prunella Gee), a Stanford academic with the looks of a *Dynasty* starlet, seems to prosper from his attentions. Even those under his care as a moral tutor with whom he does not sleep do not thrive. Alastair (Robin Lermite), the talented supreme of the college (theatre, lightly cuts his wrists, and Tim (Breffni McKenna), Davina's jilted boyfriend, takes refuge in dope – and then, more healthily, in Sueane.

Bad Language, though not windbagery, is not a revolutionary concept. It adopts the well-tried format of "realist" representations – of educational establishments – on the stage. But if ideas soon give way to contrived sexual intrigue poised uneasily between the farcical and the melodramatic, the excellent cast (Rickman in particular) and the direction of Mike Bradwell give the play a certain compelling fascination – a cloistered Bouquet of Barbed Wire with the odd very good joke putting to shant the dismembered theory.

New Oxford books: Literature

The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge

Volume One: 1871-1907

Edited by Ann Saddlemyer

Synge's plays are classics of the modern theatre. It sheds light on his early years of exile abroad, and illuminates his troubled relations with his Evangelical family, his visits to the Aran Islands and the west of Ireland which gave him the subject for his plays, and his career as a playwright. £30

Heine's Jewish Comedy

A Study of his Portraits of Jews and Judaism S. S. Prawer

Heine's work is full of portraits of Jews, men and women, real and imaginary, contemporary and historical, from Marx and the Rothschilds to Spinoza and biblical characters. This portrait gallery, here assembled for the first time in a discussion in the context of Heine's intellectual and artistic development. £35

The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932

Chris Baldick

This book examines the transformation of English literary criticism underlying the study of English Literature today. It focuses on the social objectives of the pioneer critics and educationalists who established modern English studies: in particular the aim of a national reconciliation of class conflict by the civilizing influence of literary culture, and the preservation of that culture in the face of the new dangers of "mass society" – advertising, pulp fiction, and the cinema. £19.50 Oxford English Monographs

Selected Poems

Fleur Adcock

This new volume includes a selection of early work from Fleur Adcock's first two collections, and a more substantial representation from her three most recent collections. Her newer work is represented by twenty-six recent poems, which bear out her high reputation in Britain and in her native New Zealand. The most talented woman poet now writing in Britain. Gavin Ewart, £7.95

A Bibliography of A. Conan Doyle

Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson

Arthur Conan Doyle is best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, but many of his other works of fiction have remained in print since the day they were first published. The absence of a full-scale bibliography has hindered a complete appreciation of him as man and writer, and the publication of this one should rectify the situation. Illustrated 240 *Soho Bibliographies*

Oxford University Press

to the editor

The Augustan Idea

Sir, - Claude Rawson's thoughtful review of Howard Erskine-Hill's *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (August 12) asks what the fate of the Augustan theme was after Flaubert and Conrad. The answer is not far to seek.

Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil* puts forward what is, very probably, the most penetrating and imaginatively persuasive study of Augustus in modern European literature and thought. In the encounter between Augustus and the dying Virgil - a dialogue both external and internal which, itself, takes on the dimensions of a short novel - Broch takes up precisely those motifs of ambivalence which Rawson points to. Broch's Augustus is at once the high patron of the arts, the custodian of order and civility in the Mediterranean world, and the master of political opportunity, of calculated terror. The subtle drama of the situation arises directly from Virgil's perception that the *Aeneid* is meshed in corresponding ambiguities. The Augustan order will use the poem for its own glorification. There are aspects to this order which merit such an aura. But there are also areas of darkness and inhumanity. Will the poem help to conceal these? Can its own humaneness act as anything but ornament? Responding to these questions, wrestling the *Aeneid* away from Virgil lest the poet destroy it, Broch's Augustus reveals himself to the reader.

GEORGE STEINER.
Churchill College, Cambridge.

Lillian Hellman

Sir, - I am grateful to Stephen Spender for his letter (August 12). Contrary to what your readers have been told (*American Notes*, July 15), Spender did not carry a message to me from Lillian Hellman suggesting that an apology or retraction "would do". I know of course that he gave me no message from her but it is pleasant (or unpleasant) to know also that, as I supposed, he was never entrusted with one which she somehow failed to deliver. The first I heard from the plaintiff, directly or indirectly, after the programme was the filing of the lawsuit.

Can't your magazine find a reliable correspondent in the US?

MARY MCCARTHY.
Castine, Maine.

'Consequences of Pragmatism'

Sir, - It was to be expected, I suppose, that Simon Blackburn's elegant review (July 15) of Richard Rorty's *Consequences of Pragmatism* should end in a plea for continued employment of philosophers. But we have a useful piece of jargon in economics that argues against it, "negative externalities" - like smoke from the local mill. The activities of philosophers are no trouble at home perhaps, but spill over into neighbouring places. The claim of Philosophy to be a meta-science is a public nuisance, and Richard Rorty is to be commended for doing something about it. The philosophers have suffered quite enough from this imposture. Philosophers about good reasons in politics or economics or law.

Blackburn writes: "there is no option of abandoning the use of some concept of truth, of the good, of space and time, or persons and their knowledge and agency". One wonders that he did not realize, to use Rorty's useful notion, that his sentence reads in effect: "... some concept of Truth, of the Good, of Space and Time" and so to Agency. Rorty's point is that the sensible appeal to have talk - even the much despised High Talk - about truth in models of the grain market or of knowledge in histories of medieval villages is commonly used by philosophers, as here by Blackburn, to justify talk about Truth and Knowledge. Once these fustian

get fired the neighbours commence blinking and coughing, and are unable to keep up with their proper trades. If the philosophical mill closes after all and we are left with mere High Talk (or, better, high talk) we shall become ignorant of illocutionary acts and explicit performatives, but happy yet. The high talk will at least not bore us, and the air will clear.

DONALD N. McCLOSKEY.
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The Nature of Chance

Sir, - Frank Goodridge (Letters, August 12) attributes to me a belief in chance and accident as necessary basic concepts in a physical theory. I do not understand how he could have got this impression from my review (July 29) of Pagels' book, *The Cosmic Code*, since I did not actually state my views there. I was in fact only reporting on what the author was saying in his book. Perhaps because I did not strongly dissociate myself from what the author said, Goodridge may have inferred that I agreed with the usual interpretation of quantum mechanics, and all the ideas that go with it.

I have actually long been a critic of such notions (see, for example, my book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980). Indeed, I do not think that the nature of chance and accident have yet been clearly understood. There is no doubt that the present laws of the quantum theory yield correct statistical predictions for the general properties of matter. But the question naturally arises as to whether there may be further laws, as yet unknown, which bear on what now appear to be totally fortuitous and accidental individual events. In the usual interpretation of the quantum theory it is assumed indeed that there is no way of going further, towards new ideas offering a deeper understanding of how individual events emerge. I myself feel that this latter assumption has no solid foundation, and so can be questioned seriously. However, I must admit that we have a long way to go before we can expect to understand the quantum theory in this way.

DAVID BOHM.
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The Oxford Shakespeare

Sir, - Nigel Alexander is certainly right (July 29) when he praises the strength of the editorial team now engaged on the new Oxford Shakespeare. Indeed, if Shakespearean textual studies had such a ranking, one of them, Gary Taylor, would clearly be a superstar among the younger generation of textual scholars. But to what end has this exceptional team been assembled? To produce yet one more modernized text of Shakespeare while there still exists no old-spelling edition edited to current standards, and this in the face, or at least, of the original plan for the Oxford edition set forth over forty years ago by R. B. McKelvey. Alexander makes a fairly complete list of the existing competition in modernized Shakespeares (listed by my count) but he does not really deal with the question of why Oxford has decided to make a fourth text. It would appear that the idea has not caught on well among booksellers, for when I called at three large London bookshops, and the OUP shop in Charing Cross Road, none had any copies. I was informed by an employee in one of the larger shops that they hadn't bothered to take any. No vast inroads into the modern-spelling Shakespeare market. It would appear.

As Alexander says, the Oxford Shakespeares are handsome books, well designed and printed, easy to use and attractively edited. But they are modernized. Alexander treats only one instance of the problems that this can cause.

In Henry V Taylor omits 2.1.3 so that Pistol becomes an "English" rather than "African". This is the whole fault

with modernizing. To make such a change, completely in keeping with the plan for the edition announced by Stanley Wells in 1979 (*Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling*, OUP), cannot be thought to be just modernizing; it is emendation. If ancient is a confusion between *ensigne* and *anyen*, it is the confusion of Shakespeare and his contemporaries and to "correct" the text to "English" is an awful example of what modernization has unleashed upon the texts of this and other of our older writers.

Perhaps this is a minor point, but we must ask ourselves how many such minor points (emendations) must occur in the name of modernization before the play is no longer Shakespeare's. The impact of modernization on criticism and the general understanding of the work can be usefully explored by re-reading Robert Graves and Laura Riding's 'A Study in Original Punctuation and Spelling' (*A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927). And yet we have no properly edited old-spelling text of the greatest writer in our language.

One hears, from time to time, that OUP does intend to bring out an old-spelling text later, though one never hears this officially from OUP. I hope it will be sooner rather than later. We have already waited too long for it. OUP has devoted a half-century to it, and there is simply too much editorial talent available to do it which is currently being squandered on this foray into the gutted modern-spelling market.

WILLIAM P. WILLIAMS.
12 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1.

Indo-European Languages

Sir, - John Greppin's review (July 1) of V. I. Georgiev's *Introduction to the History of the Indo-European Languages* gave an accurate assessment of this most controversial scholar in what may well be the final summation of his views. Georgiev has always demonstrated a prodigious knowledge of all the bits and pieces of antiquity, the ancient proper names and the glosses. Like Paul Kretschmer, the great classical scholar who was perhaps his model, he couples his proficiency with a bold and resourceful power of combination.

In addition to his speculations about the linguistic affiliations of Thracians and Dacians, cited in the review, Georgiev has long been associated with two other hotly disputed issues which are worthy of mention. One is the so-called "Pelasgian" hypothesis, elaborated by Georgiev in his *Vorlesungen über Griechische Sprachwissenschaft* (1941-45); he asserted that the pre-Hellenic population of Greece spoke an Indo-European language, and that by working out the distinctive phonological laws of this non-attested language, he could supply IE etymologies for about 180 Greek words of hitherto obscure derivation. What excitement! In the 1950s this thesis was fiercely attacked; he was supported by the notable monographs of A. J. Van Windekens (1952) and Albert Carnoy (1953), but I think it fair to say that most classical linguists remained sceptical.

In his latest volume Georgiev still endorses another view which has attracted few if any adherents. This is his claim that Etruscan is closely linked with Hittite and that accordingly he can use Hittite as a tool to decipher Etruscan inscriptions. His sample interpretations, as always, are highly ingenious, but the eminent French scholar Alfred Ernout (*Philologica III*, 1965) rejected the entire enterprise, and the best known of all serious Etruscologists, Massimo Pallottino, bluntly qualified this "most ambitious attempt so far" to relate Etruscan to Hittite as "without critical foundation" (*The Etruscans*, revised ed 1973, p 246). Where most academics are content to be modest joggers, Georgiev prefers to be a dare-devil race-driver.

GORDON M. MESSING.
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The Hysterical Women's Movement

Sir, - Every poetic movement in our past and recent history seems to have been fully documented, with one exception: The Hysterical Women's Movement (1963-80). We know this movement existed because reviewers frequently mention it in relation to women poets who appear to have reacted against it. The latest reference to the school, or wave, introduces the review of Gillian Clarke's *Letter from a Far Country* (July 15) in the course of which Anne Stevenson praises the author for having emerged into calmer waters after the "vengeance, self-immolation, man-hating and blood" which were "the themes of the angry women who followed Sylvia Plath", women who, apparently, took from Plath "those elements best calculated to sustain her note of hysteria".

I do not wish to denigrate Anne Stevenson's thoughtful review of Gillian Clarke's collection and am only interested to know the names of the poets who have been even more harshly castigated by Ian Hamilton as "post-Plath hysterical" or "intuscular harpies of the Adrienne Rich school". Hamilton's charge came in a review of collections by Carol Rumens and Vicki Feaver, neither of whom he considered worthy of even the "condescending type of praise" he would have liked to bestow on two practitioners whose verse was not "snappishly keen to flaunt itself as women's verse". "Sadly," he wrote, they were "as tame, predictable and well-behaved as any bloke".

These are only two amongst many examples of reviews and critical articles which measure the poets under consideration against The Hysterical Women's Movement, but in none of them are we given the names of members of that movement, or titles of the books they wrote. All we know is that their voices were almost uniformly "shrill" or "strident".

Perhaps the time has come to set the record straight, and I should like to suggest that those who have documented the movement provide a list of the women who deserve our scorn.

SYLVIA KANTARIS.
14 Osborne Park, Helston, Cornwall.

E. H. Carr

Sir, - Leo Labedz, as might be expected, counter-attacks (Letters, August 5). So, despite my five or six ill-considered and ambiguous criticisms, I am praised for my "complacent moralising". Furthermore Carr praised me for avoiding "complacent moralising" in my own book on Stalinism. Labedz asks whether I would consider this as an example of "guilt by association". Well, no. Rather I would ask him whether this was meant to reflect on Carr or on me. After all, my books did feature Stalin's crimes rather prominently! Is "complacent moralising" a virtue?

Labedz still refuses to accept that, in writing a history of a country, one is under no obligation to describe or denounce the tyrannical acts of a despot prior to the period at which they occurred. In describing the 1920s, historians will tend to analyse Stalin's rise to power, not the crimes he committed in subsequent decades. In my own book on Soviet economic history, for example, collectivization and Stalin's mass terror do not make their appearance until Chapter 7, though of course I was aware of them also when writing Chapter 1. Labedz, however, is sure that they were not in Carr's mind until the revelations of Khrushchev and Solzhenitsyn. How does he know?

Does this follow from his writings of the period? Labedz is selective in his evidence. He himself mentions, in another context, a highly favourable review by Carr of Borkenau's book on the Comintern, this appeared at a time when he was supposed to be a Stalin-apologist. Yet Borkenau's book

is vehemently anti-Stalinist. In a 1951 review of a book on diplomatic history, Carr drew attention to the fact that its Soviet author had omitted the names of almost every Soviet diplomat, because they had perished in the purges. His attitude in those years is indeed open to criticism, but such criticism requires to be less strident and more nuanced.

Now "Thermidor", Labedz continues to make heavy weather of what, in the present context, is an irrelevant issue. I did not say that the issue was unimportant, only that the passage Labedz cited from the Trotsky archives, and which had been published in 1929, did not have the importance he ascribed to it. It does show that Trotsky did not regard "Thermidor" as a precise historical analogy, but surely it must be clear that any such analogies (eg. Jacobinism, Bonapartism, or the "Clemenceau" thesis) were not meant to be taken literally; they were used by political men in political struggle. It had never occurred to me that it could be otherwise. Yes, the "Thermidor" analogy does indeed pose problems for Marxists. But, unlike Deutscher, Carr was not a Marxist. He had no "Marxist scheme" to resolve, no allegiance to a "classless social structure". So while Deutscher devoted fifty pages to "Thermidor", for Carr it rated little more than a paragraph (in Volume II) as just one sub-aspect of the dilemmas of Bolshevism. Hence my question: what has all this to do with Carr?

I was unaware that my letter had constituted an "emotional outburst". But I could be pardoned for such an outburst in response to Labedz's last paragraph. So his critics are unconcerned with the fate of Stalin's millions of Gulag victims, are they? Surely the only possible answer is: poppycock!

ALEC NOVE.
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Psychosexual Medicine

Sir, - I was of course as disappointed as any author by Anthony Clare's somewhat dismissive review (July 8) of my book, *The Making of Love*, but that is a chance we all take.

However, that so publicly known a psychiatrist should not apparently have found time to read his clinical books with care is less important to me personally than the failure of the work of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine which I attempt to describe for a general readership. May I therefore put this straight?

While the "poetic" chapter headings may not be to Clare's taste, the last "Who dares wins" is not only about premenstrual tension and the menopause, but about the fact that sexually, aging need not mean despair.

Clare says there is no follow-up. I summarize more than twenty-five years of clinical study by more than 1,300 doctors. I know of no other study of any psychological method so broadly based over such a long period.

Finally, Clare questions the importance of "psychoanalytic" training in sexual counselling. He did not apparently take in that the work is a new and brief psychosomatic application of psychoanalysis, not that the training is an in-service group method entailing only two hours fortnightly. More importantly, one of my references (Eleanor Mears, *Public Health*, 1978) reports a comparative study of the results of twenty-six of our unselected trained doctors (ie. not the "cream") with those of a unit of modified Masters and Johnson techniques which we know to be excellent (Dr John Bancroft's at Oxford). Our results were found broadly to be twice as effective in half the time, even for those measurable "sexual dysfunctions" which we would regard as mere symptoms of truly human sexual distress.

PRUDENCE TUNNADINE.
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Visionaries and victims

Stuart Schram

JONATHAN D. SPENCE

The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution 1895-1980

516pp. Penguin. Paperback, £4.50. 0 14 00 6279 3

The Gate of Heavenly Peace, says Jonathan Spence in his preface (to a book originally published in 1982 and now reissued in paperback), has come to symbolize, during the past century, popular turbulence, and dreams of escape from current realities; but in this same period, it "came to stand implacably for the power of the state". The polarity thus evoked does indeed constitute one of the main themes of Chinese history since the Reform Movement of 1895. Spence returns to this theme now and again, in particular in parallels between the repression of dissenters by the Guomindang in the 1920s and 1940s, and their treatment by the Communists after 1949, but the state does not loom large in this book. The emphasis is rather on visions of a better future, those who entertained them, and how these dreams were dissipated and frustrated.

To this extent, the subtitle is misleading. The book is not about the Chinese and their revolution, in other words about the revolutionary transformation undergone between 1895 and 1980 by Chinese society and the Chinese people as a whole. It deals rather with experience of, and participation in, revolutionary change by a relatively small sample of writers and intellectuals. There is no consistent attempt to define China's predicament in political and economic terms (as opposed to emotional and aesthetic terms), or to analyse with any rigour the choices available to the rulers, and what they might have done if they had tried. Consequently, there is no coherent explanation of why things remained, as they did in the author's view, so bad.

This need not have been the case. To present the drama and turmoil of the years 1895-1980 in terms of the perception of events by a literate and articulate group of observers such as those discussed here might have been a useful heuristic device in trying to convey to a non-specialist audience what it felt like to be a Chinese, exposed to national dismemberment, political oppression, grinding poverty and the collapse of the old cultural universe. In some degree, the book does fulfil such a purpose; the individuals whose cases Spence illuminates, in a way no one else has done before, important aspects of the revolution, and in the process brings us closer to a full understanding of its meaning.

Nonetheless, this is in many ways admirable and impressive work, displaying great literary skill, thorough and meticulous scholarship, and such rare qualities as imagination and originality. Though it does not effectively encompass the whole massive phenomenon of the twentieth-century Chinese revolution, that is almost certainly more than can reasonably be demanded of any one book. Spence illuminates, in a way no one else has done before, important aspects of the revolution, and in the process brings us closer to a full understanding of its meaning.

Speaking analytically, the crucial issue throughout the book is undoubtedly that of the interaction between Western influences and the traditional Chinese culture, and the painfully slow and difficult progress towards a new synthesis. Many of us who write about nineteenth and twentieth-century China have formulated the problem in these terms. Spence's contribution, which he is able to make because he concentrates on the intellectuals who were at once the vehicle of Westernization and the field of struggle for the interplay of many disparate influences, lies in telling us not only how some writers thought about this issue, but what it signified, existentially, to be thus pulled in several directions at once.

It is in this context which gives broader significance to the details, dwell on by Spence with manifest delight, of Xu Zhimo's experience of life in Cambridge and London in 1921-22, when he consorted with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, B.M. Foster, H. G. Wells, John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and others; as well as his hero Bertrand Russell, and learnt to love Shelley and Walter Pater; Wen Yiduo's discovery of Pater and Aubrey Beardsley in the rather more unlikely environment of Chongqing; or Qu Qubai's encounters in

advisers in China), to view the political process neither from the top, nor from the bottom, but as it were laterally. Just as the Kangxi (K'ang-hsi) Emperor was a secondary figure in that book, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kaishek, and Mao Zedong are, as the author figures here. Nor is this history from below, focusing as in a Marxist interpretation on the proletariat, or the "masses", or on the daily lives of ordinary people, as in the case of some modern Western schools of historical writing.

Instead, Spence concentrates on a group of men and women who all enjoyed to some degree the status, and the capacity to influence opinion points out by their writings and actions. Many of them had (like the Kangxi Emperor's trusted bondservant, Cao Yin, or Ts'ao Yin) direct access at some time and in some degree to the holders of power; none of them ever actually exercised power himself. Moreover, the personal torments of these writers and intellectuals are given at least as much prominence as the impact on their lives of war, famine, tyranny and revolution.

Spence endeavours to set his case-studies in a broader context by interpolating, every now and then, a brief summary of the political history of the times. These passages are, however, derivative and slightly perfunctory. (For example, there is no mention, in references to the United Front of 1923-27 between the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang, of the curious form of this alliance, known as the "bloc within", which influenced so greatly the course of events.) They are also sometimes inaccurate. (To give only one example, the land of the rich peasants had not, in 1951, been parcelled out among the poor, as stated on p. 363; Mao as well as Liu supported at this time the policy of leaving the rich peasants largely alone, to get on with the job of production.) In any case, they add up to no more than about 10 per cent of the text, and do not provide a sufficiently clear and detailed story line, so a reader could come to this book with no previous knowledge of the Chinese revolution, and take Spence's work as the single volume that would tell him everything about the subject.

In other words, Chinese society, and the Chinese state, remain a net, enmeshing the individual, as Tan Sitong wrote at the time of the Reform Movement, and Mao Zedong put it in 1919, discussing the suicide of a young woman forced into an arranged marriage. I would not venture to assert, at a time when the Party in China has once more forcefully proclaimed its right, and its duty, to exercise control over the political process, and over the direction of change, that Spence is entirely wrong. But at the same time it seems to me overly simplistic to suggest that nothing has changed, nothing can change, and that the individual in China is confronted with exactly the same dilemmas as fifty or sixty years ago. A proper answer to these questions would require, in my view, an analysis of the political system and its evolution which is almost wholly absent here.

Such reservations do not, however, detract from the value of this richly evocative account of a period which runs from the effective end of the monarchy inaugurated more than two thousand years ago by Qin Shihuang to the beginning of a substantially, if not wholly new phase in the development of the state founded by Mao Zedong in 1949. If *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* is not yet the definitive history of the Chinese revolution of the twentieth century, it will be, henceforth, the European Parliament for Wight and Hants East.

STANLEY JOHNSON is the Member of the European Parliament for Wight and Hants East.

The collective idea

Dennis J. Duncanson

EDWIN E. MOISE

Land Reform in China and North Vietnam: Consolidating the Revolution at Village Level

305pp. University of North Carolina Press. £15. 0 8078 1547 0

The land policy of Communist parties once they are in power is, with few exceptions, collectivization; the vanguard Party exercising proletarian dictatorship has to make sure of controlling all the masses' surplus value. Why then should the Chinese and Vietnamese parties have started off with the opposite policy of a vigorous "land reform" to break up estates into more or less equal individual holdings? The reason was that Stalin, their model, had to face notorious opposition when he embarked on collectivization. Both his Chinese and his Vietnamese pupils, therefore, took advantage of inequalities of land-holding in their countries to carry out a high-sounding but ruthless "land-to-the-tiller" campaign as a preliminary to enforced collectivization; as they hoped, execution of the final policy then went through without any lull.

Edwin E. Moise rightly claims that his is the first survey of land reform in China and Vietnam to appear in a single book. There are in fact many reasons for linking the actions of the two Parties - not least Ho Chi Minh's double apprenticeship under Mao Zedong, in 1924-26 and in 1938-40. Moise is right to narrate the two reforms separately, but one could wish he had spared a little more space for the similarities and differences, and related what was done to Bolshevik principle and practice. While carrying out land reform, the Vietnamese Party, for example, was copying other Chinese policies as well, from the forbidding Thought Reform to ideologies like the fly-swating campaign (152 million Vietnamese diptera downed in a week).

On the face of it, sources of information are copious: Party newspapers, observer-accounts from Western sympathizers in China - though not in Vietnam - and several rare Party treatises and the author's industrious inquiries have brought to light. The general procedure has been recounted before: Party "work-teams"

were sent to newly-occupied villages to attach class labels to everybody (labourer, poor peasant, middle peasant, rich peasant, landlord); kangaroo courts "struggled" individuals whom the cadres selected to be named as "despots" - usually civil-war "traitors"; the masses "punished" the despots for being what they were, and finally the villages and land was parcelled out, together often, with any movable "fruits of struggle". Moise draws on all types of published information but concentrates on statistics of results taken from Party treatises; he concedes that, for all the appearance of precision (as over the fives), some of the "classifications" were hit-and-miss, but credits the figures with rough reliability. In the absence of land registration before or after, it is hard to agree with him; Party condemnations of "bureaucratic" denigrated paperwork - no respect for old titles, no new titles issued, no records kept. Land reform consequently was not a measure of public administration.

Moise admits that it did entail a good deal of flogging and killing of "despots"; he then invokes scraps of circumstantial evidence, with a lot of conjecture, to minimize the bloodshed, especially in Vietnam. He hazards no guess how the flogging and killing were carried out. It is true that "rectifications" and "corrections of errors" were ordered by both Parties after it came out that some victims had not owned any land after all, but these look more like Leninist "zigzags" and Stalinist purges of "temporary allies" than bouts of bad bourgeois conscience or successes of humane social justice. The land reforms and their attendant outrages are better understood in the light of the "revolutionary violence" that has followed - not preceded - most seizures of power by Communist Parties ever since Engels enjoined on them the intimidatory *Grand Peur* of the Jacobins; they reformed men, not land - liquidated, that is, known and suspected enemies and deterred future opposition from the very masses they mobilized to do the dreadful deeds and whose interests it was intended to submerge in collectivism. But not alas, once for all: when setting off his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a decade or more later, Mao declared that wave after wave of land-reform terror would be required before the New Man could be bred in China. For the Vietnamese, land reform has recurred in the guise of permanent civil war rather than permanent revolution, but it must feel the same.

Among this week's contributors

JETHRO ACWORTH is the *nom de plume* of a leading crossword compiler for a national newspaper.

CHRIS BALDICK's *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932* was published last week.

STEVEN COLLINS is a lecturer in the Study of Religions at the University of Bristol.

I. DE MADARIAGA is the author of *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 1981. She is Professor of Russian Studies at the University of London.

JOHN DURY is Dean of Chapel at King's College, Cambridge.

M. R. D. FOOT is the author of *Resistance: European Resistance to Nazism 1940-45* (1976).

W. HAAS is Emeritus Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Manchester.

JOHN HALE is Professor of Italian at University College London.

BRIAN HARRISON is the author of *Drink and the Victorians*, 1971.

JOHN HUBBELL CROOK's *The Evolution of Human Consciousness* was published in 1980.

STANLEY JOHNSON is the Member of the European Parliament for Wight and Hants East.

ELIE KEDOURIE's books include *Islam and the Modern World*, 1980.

E. J. KENNEY's edition of the *Moretti*, sometimes ascribed to Virgil, will be published this autumn.

I. D. McFARLANE is Professor of French Literature at the University of Oxford.

CHARLES NICHOLL's biography of Thomas Nashe, *A Cup of News*, was published earlier this year.

MICHAEL RAMSEY was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961 to 1974.

STUART SCHRAM is Professor of Politics with reference to China at the University of London.

DAVID SHAW is senior lecturer in French at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN is Director of the Tauber Institute at Brandeis University, Massachusetts.

JOACHIM WHALEY is a Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge.

J. J. WILKES is Professor of Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the University of London.

YORICK WILKS's most recent book, co-edited with Karen Spark-Jones, is *Automatic Natural Language Parsing*, 1983.

Rough but true

Charles Nicholl

ROGER POOLEY (Editor)
George Gascoigne: The Green Knight,
Selected Poetry and Prose
160pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £5.95.
0 85635 270 9

The poems of George Gascoigne are more often mentioned than read. He is usually met with as an "early" or "formative" example of some Elizabethan literary mode: the sonnet sequence, the blank-verse satire, the prose comedy, the prose novel. Gascoigne had a stab at them all. This role of literary pioneer is not just modern labelling; by 1589, twelve years after his death, Nashe was describing him in just these terms, as one who "first beat the path" to poetic heights achieved "since his departure".

In bulk, Gascoigne's alliterative, semi-proverbial style is hard to digest. He seems - another favourite term - "transitional", having neither the Tudor grace of his predecessors, Wyatt and Surrey, nor the intellectual daring of the later Elizabethans. Yet for all this Gascoigne was himself, and Roger Pooley's slim new selection is just what was needed to bring him out. Here is the poet at his best - tough, humorous, vocal, direct - together with selection from his less-known prose works: his love intrigue, *The Adventures of Master F.J.* (1573); his "Notes of Instruction" on verse-making (1575); his news pamphlet, *The Spoil of Antwerp* (1576), a finely clipped piece of front-line journalism.

Gascoigne's brief, crowded career has the typical flavour of the young Elizabethan "gent". His father, Sir John, was a Bedfordshire landowner; JP, MP, staunch Catholic reactionary. Born in about 1539, George was probably educated at Cambridge and certainly at Gray's Inn (1555-57). After the accession of Queen Elizabeth he sparked hopefully at court, but was "cast off" in 1563 and retired back to Bedfordshire to nurse his debts. He married, farmed, fought occasional duels and frequent law-suits, and composed poems. In 1565 he returned to legal studies at Gray's Inn. For his literary friends there - Alexander Neville,

the Kinwelmarthe brothers, et al - he wrote the excellent "Memories" variations, and translated Italian plays: *Doice's Glocasta*, with Francis Kinwelmarthe, and *Ariosto's I Suppositi*. His version of the latter - *Gascoigne's Suppos* - was used by Shakespeare in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In the early 1570s, restless and hounded by creditors, Gascoigne took to soldiering, and joined Sir Humphrey Gilbert's unit fighting the Spanish in the Netherlands. Money problems probably prompted another decisive step, a most "ungentlemanly" one: in 1573 he published his first collection of poetry, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*.

It is the hard-pressed variety of Gascoigne's life which gives the *Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* its distinctive voice. Amid the predominant love lyrics runs a wry, intimate vein of autobiography. In "Gascoigne's Woodmanship", a nobleman jokes about Gascoigne's bad aim with a bow: this he takes as a useful metaphor for his life of discarded hopes and missed opportunities, as courtier, lawyer, lover, farmer, philosopher, soldier - "Believe me, Lord, the case is nothing strange: He shoots awry almost at every mark." A later poem in the same mood - "The Green Knight's Farewell to Fancy" - gives Pooley's selection its title. This Green Knight is not the implacable assassin of medieval romance, but the disappointed face of George in the mirror. A chatty verse letter from "long George" to his friend Bad Withipoll, and the downbeat ending of "Dan Bartholomew's Dolorous Discourses" - "I thus bewray the torments of my time/Bear with my Muse, it is not as it was" - catch this same intimate note.

In his prime in the 1570s Gascoigne was a man of action and a popular author: the soldier-poet, "iam Mari quam Mercurio", who lived hard and saw straight. In the Netherlands he was variously a government agent, a prisoner of war, and an eye-witness of the sacking of Antwerp. "Gascoigne's Voyage into Holland, An. 1572", here given entire, is a superb action-poem, a crackling story of naval warfare that races over its rhyme-scheme like something by Browning. As "The Fruits of War" (1575) and *The Spoil of Antwerp* show, he was for his literary friends there - Alexander Neville,

linguistic drum-beater. He totted up the body-count, loathed the Dutch allies, praised his Spanish captor De Liques, and saw brutalities that made a mock of military discipline: "sure, if this be their order, I had rather be counted a *besieger* than a brave soldier in such a band." As a member of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's seafaring circle he deeply impressed Gilbert's young half-brother, Walter Raleigh, whose earliest excursion into print was a poem in praise of Gascoigne's *Steel Glass* (1576), and whose own later *contempus mundi* poems owe much to Gascoigne's vision.

A flood of Gascoigne works appeared in 1575-6: a revised edition of his poetry, *The Posies*, including a bowdlerized version of *Master F.J.*; a verse translation, *The Noble Art of Venetie*; his innovative satire, *The Steel Glass*, and its stage companion, *The Glass of Government*; tracts religious and homiletic (*A Delicate Diet for Dainty-mouthed Drunkards*); a preface to Gilbert's tract on the North-West Passage, which he also saw through publication. At Kenilworth in July 1575 he scripted, and performed in, Leicester's sumptuous entertainments for the Queen. On the crest of popularity and success, he sickened. In October 1577, at the home of the poet George Whetstone, he died, aged about thirty-eight.

As a stylist Gascoigne was partially eclipsed by the successes of Euphuism and neo-Platonic sonnetting, but his virtues undoubtedly surface again, in the verse satires of Donne and Hall, in the pamphlets of Greene, Nashe and Dekker. More, Gascoigne gave a kind of shape to the Elizabethan writer: provincial-born, socially mobile, individualist, the intellectual with a commercial touch. Boasting his own disreputability Nashe said, "I have sung George Gascoigne's Counterpoint", meaning he had done a spell in the Counter, the debtor's prison. He had no particular line in mind, just an image of Gascoigne - who was indeed imprisoned for debt in 1570 - as a man of the world, a poet of hard realities. Gascoigne will survive, and all the better for this new anthology. His poems, as he once said of his "metres", are "but rough in many places, and yet they are true".

Performing rights

Lachlan Mackinnon

JONATHAN V. CREWE

Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship
120pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £12.
0 8018 2848 1

Jonathan Crewe sees Thomas Nashe's exuberant carnival of language as an assertion of rhetoric and performance against the univocal notion of truth by which they are customarily disciplined. It is mildly surprising not to find Julia Kristeva's discussion of Menippean discourse in the footnotes to *Unredeemed Rhetoric*, because Crewe shares with her an interest in Bakhtin and in the disruptive, anarchic forces of the Renaissance appears to repress: the publisher describes this book as an "aggressively innovative reading" of Nashe and, although the position it takes is hardly novel, it is certainly aggressive.

Crewe proposes that Nashe acknowledges rhetoric, a decentred system, as parasitic on idealism but that he uses it to unsettle his reader and the reader's preconceptions. So far, this sounds like the routine deconstruction job, and in many ways the book's tone supports that. However, Nashe is an author who resists his generic death. As Crewe says:

The privileging of rhetoric to the exclusion of any competing principle of utterance or interpretation represents a formal or philosophical possibility, yet this is not a possibility extensively developed in the work of Nashe and his peers. Despite some reversals of polarity, local rather than general in extent, what emerges as a more serious possibility is anxiety about rhetorical encroachment or fear of the seemingly inexhaustible (malign, hidden) implications of rhetorical performance.

Romance and religious poetry are the escape routes which Nashe does not take and, to put it otherwise, he is as frightened by the latent deconstructive power of his work as his reader. Crewe is humanist enough not to wreat the work wholly from its maker, and is therefore able to persuade us that the terror Nashe evokes in Gabriel Harvey and his progeny may indeed be related to the help of shifting significations Nashe uncovers.

It is a hell because, as Crewe shows, Nashe is not as liberated as he seems. Jonsonian comedy serves to remind us that "humour" is entrapment: it is a pity that Crewe does not explore *The Alchemist* in this context, as in Face we see rhetoric unable to leave the circuit of servility. Where the play is used to parallel Nashe's creation of a fallen, urban poet to replace the poetry that fails him. Rhetoric may enslave its user, and Crewe finds in Nashe the compulsions and sadomasochism which enact that condition at the psychological level.

This is, then, a forceful and interesting book. It must be read with caution, though: in a passage dealing with informers in *Leviathan*, Crewe invents difficulties which simply do not exist. Part of the problem is created by the selectiveness of his quotation, part by an apparent wish to be clever instead of serious. Crewe makes heavier weather of pronouns than is usual, and by being obsessed with Nashe's textuality bypasses his rapidly and intermittently careless style. This book is not wholly reliable in detail, and it won't do to say of possible misrepresentation that "in the case of so unacademic an author the offense may be considered pardonable". As Crewe seems to acknowledge, his argument is not entirely convincing, but it takes the Nashe problem seriously and offers some useable ideas about it. A lively book on Nashe rather than the problem would now be welcome.

The reader chastened

Nicholas Spollar

JAN FERGUS

Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel: Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice
162pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 33 31989 3

Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel may perhaps lay claim to a certain originality as the only study of the author to limit itself almost exclusively to her first three novels. Jan Fergus finds her subject in the comparison of them with eighteenth-century models, and in Jane Austen's manipulation of her readers' responses. She pays tribute to the sophistication of the novelist's techniques, discussing *Northanger Abbey* in its relation to Gothic and sentimental literary conventions, and *Pride and Prejudice* with reference to *Cecilia* and *Sir Charles Grandison*. Like *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility* is seen as a "bookish" work, in which the reader's expectations are foiled, and attention is drawn to the conventions that are both used and undercut.

In spite of its largely commendable aims, and some shrewd comments, this is a number of ways a disappointing book. Unlike Marilyn Butler's 1975 study of a related topic, with its marvellous and drilling of the evidence, *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel* is not a systematic study of its subject and raises above the subject. Austen's intentions are found to be "primarily didactic" because of her commitment to: pleasing instruction, and we learn that her teachings are embodied in her books rather than in her precepts, a fact which rather oddly leads Dr. Fergus to a "distinction between readers' emotions and their judgments. Her thesis that the reader is encouraged into mistaken interpretations, and then like the characters, chastened, seems to overstate the case. Of course there are some marvellous coup de

théâtre in Jane Austen - literally so in the case of the interrupted play in *Manfield Park* - but when it comes to interpretation the reader tends to be guided by the author, as in the case of Elizabeth Bennet's misjudgments or General Tilney's cadishness. The confident and pervasive moral discriminations of the author provide an equivalent for us to that "rule to apply to, which settled everything", which sustains Fanny Price.

The lack of an appropriate framework is notably apparent in the discussion of *Northanger Abbey*, which is treated as a burlesque different from Jane Austen's other novels "in almost every possible way", lacking serious or moral content, and with a heroine who is "comic throughout". It should be obvious that Catherine's discoveries about her true and her false friends necessarily involve moral discriminations, as do, at a further remove, Henry Tilney's capacity for moral distinctions, and his awareness of the clichés of feeling and language. The value of his work is much enhanced by the eminently comparative framework in which he has set it. He ranges from China, Thailand, antiquity, the Ottoman empire, Africa and the New World, to the Amerindians of the North-West Pacific coast, who practiced a particularly harsh form of slavery in which slaves were killed and thrown into the sea as a demonstration of their owners' contempt for wealth.

Hellie has divided his book into a first part, dealing with the law of slavery, and a second part, dealing with the sociology of slavery. In the first section he discusses the evolution of slavery from the fifteenth century onwards, omitting, however, any analysis of the debate on the nature of slavery in Kievan Rus'. This is perhaps the century there were at least eight different kinds of slavery, including hereditary slaves, debt slaves, military slaves, elite slaves, etc. Hellie analyses the law of the land as it affected masters and slaves, slave families, "court" procedure, lawsuits between owners over fugitive slaves etc., and draws attention to the fact

RICHARD HELLIE

Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725

776pp. University of Chicago Press. £31.50.
0 226 33647 0

A glance at the index of any modern work on medieval or modern European history will reveal how seldom the word "slavery" occurs. It is as though slaves played but a small part in the social structure and economy of Europe, compared to the world of antiquity, the Middle East, the Far East or the New World. Yet in Romance and Teutonic languages the very word for slave, "sclavus", has been identified since the ninth century with Slav, for the unfortunate population of medieval Rus' was sold into slavery, in Europe as well as in the East, by its own princes. After the disappearance of Kievan Rus' and the Ottoman conquest of the Crimea, Muscovy remained the principal supplier of the slave-markets of Kefe, Istanbul and Venice, as a consequence of the almost annual Tartar raids over two centuries, which usually netted several thousand victims a year. There were Russian and Polish slaves in Germany, Italy and Spain, and, as late as 1678, Russian slaves in the galleys of Marseilles.

These slaves were either captured in war or seized in order to be sold. Richard Hellie's *Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725* deals with a somewhat different kind of institution. Hellie's name is well known to students of Russian history as that of the author of *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy*, published in 1972, a work of fundamental importance for the understanding of the evolution of pre-Petrine Russia in general and serfdom in particular. His new book is a most welcome addition to the growing number of scholarly studies in English on Muscovite Russia and reveals the same masterly combination of analysis and synthesis. As he has pointed out elsewhere, slavery in Russia has not aroused the same interest as serfdom, possibly because its extent has not been appreciated in spite of the fact that the Code of 1649 contains more articles on slavery than on any other topic and that slaves may have numbered 10 per cent of the population.

Soviet historiography has also tended to neglect the subject, even to deny its importance. Nevertheless, since the death of Stalin Soviet historians have been able to come to grips with the problem of the large-scale presence of slaves in a society alleged to be feudal in Marxist terms, and who performed the functions of managers or officials for great lords, or even the tsar. The values which justified this kind of elite slavery seem to have derived from a very ancient sense that a free man could never consent to be the servant of another. (How different from feudalism, with its emphasis on personal service and loyalty to a feudal overlord. Presumably no young people of good family were ever sent to serve as pages or maids in the houses of great lords in order to learn manners and the way of the world.) But there was a whole range of not necessarily menial tasks which needed to be performed, such as managing estates, or acting as the agent of a lord in his private or official capacity. Since no free man would serve, such tasks had to be carried out by slaves.

This is the mentality reflected in the statute of 1597, which totally eliminated the concept of a "servant" and replaced it by the "slave". The statute affected both slaves and the free person who had served another for more than six months voluntarily must be converted into a slave on a limited service contract; and if a slave had borrowed money, he was no longer to be allowed to repay the principal but was to remain a slave. This law, as Hellie puts it, expresses the government view that "anybody who owned a slave was a slave". On the other hand, the slave owner also suffered a diminution of his property rights since the limited contract slave had to be manumitted on the death of his master. This meant that the owner could not sell him, though he could and did give him away as part of a dowry.

The class of the unfree

I. de Madariaga

Strange as it may seem, just as slavery was being eliminated in the rest of Europe in favour of servants, so in Russia a type of slavery was being strengthened, and servants were being finally eliminated.

Yet if we bring together the specific features of Russian *kholops*, we find that there was no slave-market in Muscovy; slaves were to an overwhelming extent insiders who "sold" themselves, that is to say the act of sale was theirs, ultimately, however harsh the economic or psychological pressures which drove them to it. Slave and slave-owner had the same ethnic background and the same speech. They shared the same faith and worshipped in the same church. The slave marriage-tie was respected and the slave woman accompanied her husband in cases of disputed ownership. Moreover, Muscovite slaves seem on the whole not to have been used for productive economic purposes, whatever the situation may have been in Kievan Rus'. They might sometimes be settled on farms, or employed as agricultural labourers. More usually, a slave was employed as a household servant, or as a mounted fighting-man, a groom or a baggage-train attendant. The number of elite slaves began to decline in the seventeenth century as the government developed its own impersonal agencies of administration, unconnected with private households, but slaves could still kill the cross (take the oath) on their masters' behalf in lawsuits and act as their advocates.

Clearly, if slavery be regarded as a postponement of imminent death then Muscovite slavery offered a way out in time of famine, war and devastation, for the inadequate, the incompetent, the unlucky and the disadvantaged, in a country where all forms of charity, whether private or monastic, were conspicuous by their absence. One would seek in vain in Muscovy for the soup-kitchens of Spanish convents. Hellie produces a great deal of evidence to support the view that slavery provided a haven in bad times. More slaves sold themselves, to a wider range of owners, and at a lower price during the famine years of 1601-03. And though the bolder spirits, having recovered from the short-term crisis which had led them to sell themselves in the first place, often fled to freedom

on the periphery, yet many slaves freed on the death of their owner promptly sold themselves to a similar type of owner, having lost the will-power to struggle on independently.

All these features suggest that Muscovite slavery was so unlike the type of economic slavery associated for instance with the New World that one wonders if the same word should be applied to both systems. Hellie argues that it should, and points to the fact that though the process of enslavement was different, the actual power of the slave-owner over the slave was the same. The slave had no peculium, no choice of employment or residence or wife. The fact that he was by and large better treated came about mainly because he was part of the family, and it did not give him any more rights when it came to the crunch. While what Hellie says is doubtless true in the perspective of comparative slavery over time and space, nevertheless, for the modern non-specialist reader whose idea of slavery derives mainly from the New World, the fact that a human being makes the initial decision himself and is not captured, torn away from his homeland and delivered into an alien culture is surely fundamental. Within the context of European slave ownership in modern history, Muscovite "slavery" is unique.

If the motive of the slave was economic security, what was the motive of the slave-owner? Considering the normal cost of buying a slave (averaging two rubles compared to twenty or thirty in the slave-markets of Venice or Kefe) and the cost of feeding him throughout the year, Hellie argues that slave-owning came into the category of status-orientated conspicuous consumption. This may well be true of great magnates, yet clearly one servant at least was a necessity for a low-grade military servitor, and when you cannot employ a servant, you must buy a slave. The military servitor needed a servant on campaign, the married military servitor needed servants for household duties. Hellie notes the use of slaves for drawing water, hewing wood, kitchen gardening etc., and argues that it was the use of slaves which made it possible to keep women in the seclusion from which Peter the Great finally and forcibly delivered

them. But he does not mention slaves in the domestic economy. This seems a singular omission. There were presumably slave wet-nurses. Women must have concerned themselves with brewing, baking, washing, mending and making clothes, preserving, even if spinning and weaving was done by peasant women. Married servants would need female slaves for these tasks (even Parson Woodforde had two maids and a man). Hellie notes that male slaves far outnumbered female slaves in surviving records, and he attributes this fact to the practice of female infanticide. But is it possible that women could remain servants without becoming slaves? Or that single women, whether slaves or servants, were simply not counted because they were far too insignificant?

Unlike serfdom, slavery in Russia ended with barely a whimper. Hellie does not study the process in any detail, and the most recent relevant work, by E. V. Anisimov, came out after his own book was published. It was of course the quite incidental achievement of that terrible *shimplicissimus*, Peter the Great. Disregarding completely the property rights of his subjects, Peter gave freedom to slaves who volunteered for the armed forces to the extent that a large proportion of the army in its early years was composed of ex-military slaves. But the late of the slaves was bound up with that of the serfs on the introduction of the poll-tax in 1721. It was a tax designed exclusively for the upkeep of the army, and logically enough it was not levied on army officers (ie, the nobility) or on soldiers. It was levied on serfs who were engaged in productive occupations but not on slaves, who merely received a wage or maintenance. But it proved too difficult to maintain the distinction between different kinds of labour, and in January 1723 the impatient tsar decreed that all slaves and peasants be jointly placed on the tax-rolls. Like a slave, a serf could now be sold without land, or taken off the land to serve in the household. Like a serf the slave could now be turned into a peasant or a craftsman, and he lost the right to freedom on the death of his master. Both slave and serf were the lower class when they were merged into one single class of the unfree.

Radical powers

Chris Baldick

HEATHER GLEN

Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads

399pp. Cambridge University Press. £25 (paperback, £9.95).
0 521 25084 6

Two collections of poems as close in time, subject-matter and apparent simplicity as *Lyrical Ballads* and Blake's *Songs* seem to cry out for comparative readings; it is surprising that no extended analysis has appeared until now. Heather Glen answers the need well. In *Vision and Disenchantment*, with a work of meticulous close reading informed at every turn by a detailed sense of the political and cultural context of the two collections, the strength of her analysis is its grounding. In an examination of the minor genres - children's books and "magazine verse" - within and against which Blake and Wordsworth were writing, both working to rebuke their moralizing routines, to subvert the easy patrician humanitarianism of their readers.

Much of this has been suggested before, but Heather Glen builds it into a larger, persuasive comparative argument, testing the respective visions of the world which the two poets offer in place of their contemporaries' platitudes. The result is the *fit* suggests, a fresh Blake response. Wordsworthians will suspect that the exercise itself gives a built-in disadvantage to the more mixed and tentatively experimental *Lyrical Ballads*; but the comparison is at least never allowed to degenerate into a clumsy battle of wills.

The focus of the contrast is less on the undermining of clichés or of controversial moral terms than on the degree to which Blake and Wordsworth envisage a "positive answer to the social problems which contemporary radicals met with largely liberating about demystification as such". Heather Glen argues, and she accordingly attributes greater radical power to "The Echoing Green" and "Infant Joy" than to the *Songs of Experience*, finding in the former a vision of potential mutuality - a vision neglected, then as now, by a deadlocked radicalism.

In *Lyrical Ballads*, Glen sees Wordsworth pointing away from such possibilities as surely as Blake points towards them. His isolated voice seeks a human community yet slips back into a gully, and tragic solipsism in which other people shrink into remote, insubstantial signs. The argument is a good deal more sensitive than such a summary might suggest, the readings - particularly of "Simon Lee" - unsettling but never forced.

This is a Blakean book: not least in seeking to apply the social vision of the *Songs* to today's world, but it avoids the vices of that kind of Blakean exegesis which smoothes the *Songs* by wheeling on the phobos of the "prophecy" of the prophetic books. Indeed, Glen seeks towards the "rationalism" in her use of Blake's other writings, restricting herself almost exclusively to his marginalia with Wordsworth more room is made for *The Preface* and the essay on *poetry*.

Heather Glen engages in responsible criticism: in the important sense she has, to the English radical tradition, something to which to be responsible, the incidental blemishes

in *Vision and Disenchantment* in turn reflect those of the tradition. All the way from Cobbett's "The Thing" to E. P. Thompson's "extremism", English radical writers have made it almost a principle to name their adversary only with the utmost of precision. Glen's terms, usually sharp and exact, blur at this point. On a single page we read that Wordsworth belonged to "the polite culture", and shared with Coleridge a "polite frame of reference", that the life of his neighbours mirrored that of "the polite classes", and that Blake too was patronized by a "polite society". "Polite" is certainly an important term in the period examined, but to allow it such prominence in the diagnosis is circularly self-defeating.

A further irritation is the overloading of the notes with lavish quotation from Glen's favourite modern moralists, whose nebulous terms at times infect the text - at least one "meaningful" interaction" is perpetuated; this is perhaps the privilege of an author seriously concerned with the kind of future possibilities which strain our current vocabulary. It is, after all, as an inspiration to political change that Blake is valued, and Wordsworth found wanting in this work. For a forceful endorsement of Glen's verdict on this point, one need look no further than the writer whom she acknowledges as a sparing partner in the forming of her arguments, E. P. Thompson. One of the memorable successes of *Protest and Survive* is his application to nuclear deterrence of Blake's lines: "And mutual fear brings peace/Till the selfish loves increase." Glen can scarcely imagine Wordsworth being mobilized for the radical cause, today with such startling power. *Vision and Disenchantment* goes a long way to explaining why not.

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The lower orders

Joachim Whaley

HERMANN REBEL

Peasant Classes: The Bureaucratization of Property and Family Relations under Early Habsburg Absolutism 1511-1636
354pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £28.20.
0 691 05366 9

Is it possible to explain the transition from feudal to modern society? Most historians are at a loss when they confront this question. Those who have attempted an answer have done so on a broad canvas. The traditional view, held by scholars like Otto Brunner and Gerhard Oestreich, was that the key to change lay in the way that early modern monarchs

systematically rationalized the complex social and legal structures of the feudal world. More recently, historians such as Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein have insisted on examining the problem in terms of the emergence of a capitalist world economy. Whatever the differences between the two schools of thought, the argument is generally that peasant society was more complex than the conventional approach. But Rebel does not satisfy the expectations which he arouses. Most of his book is devoted to a detailed analysis of some 860 peasant household inventories from Upper Austria covering the period 1609-40. Not surprisingly, he finds that peasant society was more complex than the conventional approach, and that differences in wealth, status and power often generated considerable tensions within it. These were liable to erupt in violence at times of general economic and political crisis, as in the 1620s and 1630s, so that peasant rebellion against the political and religious policies of the crown could assume the character of what Rebel likes to call a "class war".

Hermann Rebel shares a common unease with the grand models and rightly maintains that empirical studies alone can provide more adequate answers. His own book purports to be

such a study which, its author hopes, will open up new avenues of inquiry. It is unlikely to succeed. Rebel criticizes his predecessors for the generality and crudity of their assertions, but his own answer is to resort to a more complex theory which, as it is elaborated in this book, is all but incomprehensible. His categories of analysis, based on a Weberian society, Rebel's book is completely inadequate. As an account of Upper Austrian history between 1500 and 1650, it is inconclusive. The peasants of early modern Austria still await their historian.

Fundamentally, Rebel's argument is not as novel as he claims. When the theory and the jargon have been stripped away we are left with a restatement rather than a reinterpretation of conventional views. "Bureaucratization" turns out to be just another, less helpful, way of describing the extension of social control. As an analysis of peasant society, Rebel's book is completely inadequate. As an account of Upper Austrian history between 1500 and 1650, it is inconclusive. The peasants of early modern Austria still await their historian.

Le livre dans les sociétés pré-industrielles (428pp. Athens: Centre de Recherches Néohelléniques, Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique) records the proceedings of an international conference held two years ago. It offers not only an unusually angled geographical view of the subject, encompassing the Greek world, other areas under Ottoman domination but speaking Western languages, and western Europe. Equally importantly, the conference was a reminder of the scholarly interest now being established in the history of the written or printed word - of its impact on individual readers and on society as a whole - and the speakers included some of those most vigorous in redefining the subject. Among twenty-one papers here, those of Giles Barber, Robert Darnton, Francis Walton, Elizabeth Eisenstein, H.-J. Koppitz and H.-J. Martin present (a perspective largely through American and western European eyes, but the papers in Greek (with summaries in French) will be found no less provoking.

technological age, the "experiment" has repeated itself in several places. As a heterolingual population is assembled—according to plans for apparently everything except language—it happens frequently that the emerging lingua franca of a reduced patchwork idiom takes roots, within two or three generations, it turns native, enriches its vocabulary, acquires ever greater structural complexity, and extends the range of its uses.

Such eccentric developments, which do not proceed at the leisurely pace of what we regard as normal linguistic evolution, are (as R. A. Hall has pointed out) similar to what has been proposed by some language-planners: the deliberate reduction of a given language (such as Latino sine flexione or Basic English) is a kind of pidgin,

and more extensive mixtures (like Esperanto) are a kind of creole. None of these proposals appears to be promising; they cannot compete with the richer traditions of existing world languages. Even an established creole has an uncertain future: in a similar condition, it tends to sprout varieties that shade off into one of its source languages, and is then liable to be replaced by that language. Pidgins and creoles are only just mentioned in Grosjean's survey, and this in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) their obvious connection with his recurrent defence of code-switching. Of artificial languages, only one is mentioned, but this is considered in greater detail: the American Sign-language of the Deaf is suggestively compared to languages of other minorities.

The central chapters offer a survey of recent educational and psycholinguistic research. The general impression to be derived from it is not encouraging. For almost any line of research, when we pursue it over a number of years, we find the succession of tests to fall into a dismal pattern: first, a vogueish hypothesis is confirmed; next, another battery of tests succeed in confirming a contradictory hypothesis; finally, both kinds of tests are critically examined, and their results are found to be due either to a prejudicial choice of subjects or to uncontrolled conditions of the tests themselves. It is not surprising that, for "describing a person's bilingualism", Grosjean prefers to rely on case-histories, rather than tests.

Some significant and puzzling facts, which do not lend themselves to very general assumptions about "the value of bilingualism" or "the nature of linguistic competence", remain unexplained. The difficulty, for instance, that is experienced by many very fluent bilinguals when they are asked to translate from one of their languages into the other does not seem to have been tackled to all. Apparently, a hypothesis is not easy to come by. We do not seem to know enough about translation, and not enough about the skill of it, to enable us to explain how it differs from the skill of speaking two languages. Grosjean presents the problem—though, characteristically, without connecting it with his report (some fifty pages earlier) on the remark-

able "translating skill" of bilingual children. This is not a survey to turn to for sustained thought on any aspect of bilingualism. It offers strongly held opinions, rather than arguments to support them. The six overlapping chapters can, without much loss, be read in any order. But they do, under their various headings, provide us with a useful assembly of relevant facts, and with references to a research-literature which, even as long ago as 1956 when Haugen set out to review it, was described by him as "mountainous". Anyone interested in the distinctly personal aspects of bilingualism will find it rewarding to dip into this survey; he is bound to discover a good deal that has escaped his own attempts at mountaineering.

Touched by Tibet

John Hurrell Crook

ANDREW HARVEY
A Journey in Ladakh
236pp. Cape. £8.50.
0 224 02036 0

A Journey in Ladakh is a young man's book full of the enthusiasm for distant, dusty lands where wisdoms other than our own are found; a book as much about tourists as it is about the local people, not a book of adventure but one about experiences in buses, gentle walks that often have no clear destination and conversations in bars and monastery rooms. Andrew Harvey's holiday becomes an exercise in spiritual tourism that succeeds because he eventually drops his skills, his need to write, his Oxbridge preoccupations and his inner melancholia and is prepared to hear the sounds and voices of an essential simplicity. In the end he glimpses the radical clarity of Buddhism revealed at last in the person of a high lama of great integrity with a gift for showing people themselves. To reach this starting point he does not travel far but he sees the sights of Ladakh with a fresh eye inspired by landscape:

...a silence before that phantasmagoria of stone, those vast wind-palaces of red and ochre and purple rock—a silence so truly stunned and wondering that words of description emerge from it slowly, and at first only in broken images....

There are better books on Ladakh if one wants to be informed, to read

about mountains and high passes, or about the depths of Buddhism and the local culture. Indeed, some offhand pages suggest that the author is quite poorly read so far as the detailed appreciation of the land is concerned. His brief excursion into anthropology is inaccurate and outdated and his account of the culture is for tourists only. Indeed, A Journey in Ladakh at its worst remains a successful bid for sales in the growing market of those impelled towards the mountains. Beautifully edited, almost glib in its sometimes prosy precision, it will make comforting reading between jolts on the bus crossing the Zoji la.

For Ladakh has (rightly) become a Mecca for that ever-growing band of Europeans touched by Tibet and its sad history who wish to see the remnants of the pre-1959 culture still extant and strong in this mountain-locked land. Yet, as with tourism everywhere, the process destroys the very essence of the place that attracts it. Harvey gives us brilliant little descriptions of fellow tourists whose spiritual needs and illusions draw them in a steady stream of overcrowded buses to a country ill equipped to receive them. Hospitality is now strained to its limits and, with expectations set so high, disillusionment will be inevitable for many.

There are memorable passages: the entranced oracle at Sabu coming out of her traditional role to scream: "He is a foreigner. He does not believe. He comes to test me. He is a fool!" and following up with clear insight and opinion: Georges Perce: "I am in despair. Otherwise I am thirty-five years old, unmarried and quite

cheerful", whose palindromes are devastating: "Elu par cette crapule" and "Esopé resté ici et se repose"; the incorrigible Dilip with his noisy, perceptive wife; and the translation session with Nawang Tsering when the two of them produced some lovely renderings of Ladakhi songs:

In the old days
In the old days of Shey
Everyone wore brocade of dragons
And danced like peacocks.

Yet, almost in spite of its ease of style, precise editing and packaged presentation, this book is ultimately concerned with heartfelt experience. Although it remains unclear as to what command of Tibetan or Ladakhi he actually has, Harvey achieves a directness of contact that would be impossible for most visitors. He is as genuinely touched by this land as by its people. His poet's eye leads him aright when, early in his journey, he selects an image of sunlight around which to weave his tale. There was a farm high in the hills, alone, dwarfed by mountains. Three horses stood motionless in pools of dark gold light, a crescent field of white glowing in the sun. This experience of landscape intensifies when he spends some days alone at the old monastic village of Alci. Without a realization of what is happening, he is thrown into meditation by the stillness and power of the place. "It is the new transparency of my mind, I find that everything is the same sound, the same ringing sound only in different registers, different intensities. I am frightened that I shall not be able to survive so much feeling." And later: "Yet—I need more than this rock, this light, these birds. I need to be taught

how to work with what I have begun to know here—I am no longer afraid of happiness, I feel—that it will be a master, clearer and more powerful than any of the griefs I have known—I returned to Leh."

Harvey's account of his meetings with Thuksey Rinpoche and with the other monks and lamas of his entourage is deeply personal and sensitively conveyed. Apparently unaware of the psychological power of the meditative trances of mind into which he sometimes now falls, he begins to receive the Rinpoche's teaching through simply being with the man and, as it were, imbibing his spirit, rather than through any spoken words

—significant as these are. One can sense his breathing quietening down, the muscles becoming less tense, the voice softer, less insistent, and the mind emptying and stumbling across love, surprised by joy.

Yet the Western intellect, as so often, re-asserts itself, insisting on a pose of participant observer; the writing is too self-important and opportunities for silence seem almost willfully to be missed. Perhaps too quickly introduced to the practice of visualization before a capacity for stillness has been learned, Harvey nevertheless leaves for England with new insights, hope, and a deep love and respect for a remarkable man.

Tossing the word-salad Down with deduction

Jethro Acworth

E. M. KIRKPATRICK (Editor in Chief)
Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary
1,583 pp. Edinburgh: Chambers.
19.95.
0 550 10234 5

The new edition of Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (the apostrophe went some years ago) will undoubtedly please players of word games and solvers (let alone compilers) of crossword puzzles. The publishers are aware of the fact that their dictionary is already widely loved and used by such people and make much of this in presenting the new edition. "The unusual and archaic words in Chambers", says the new preface, "are a positive treasure-store for the word-puzzler" (thereby introducing us, incidentally, to two hyphenated words not in the dictionary itself).

Why, we may reasonably ask? What is it about this very Scottish English dictionary that has endeared it to the "large and loyal readership" claimed by the editor? The reason must lie principally in its breadth of coverage coupled with a markedly liberal policy on the qualifications required of a word for inclusion in an ostensibly English dictionary, which together point to an engagingly idiosyncratic approach. What other reason could there be for including *unataker* (*unataker* in the last edition), the Swedish plural form of a Eskimo word meaning a point of rock appearing above the surface of land-ice, or *laddo*, a Japanese form of fencing, than that they simply appealed to the lexicographer? And why not? E. M. Kirkpatrick maintains that for its size *Chambers* is unparalleled in its comprehensiveness. She may well be right (though if its size is unique, so what?) Few will have the stamina to count 1,583 pages-worth of entries for the dubious satisfaction of challenging a claim. Certainly it is that *Chambers* is big. Though with fewer pages than the old edition the new one has a larger page size and a more elegant layout; a better balance between the typefaces used, a more generous space between the columns of type on the page, and a greater extension of the headwords, all of which should please the user, albeit subliminally. But what adds most to the overall number of entries in the new edition is the improved cross-referencing. It was a serious flaw in previous editions (even though *one* which offered crossword complex the occasional opportunity for "above-average" entries) that *Chambers* did not include archaic and obsolete spellings given at the main entry were not given separate entries at their appropriate alphabetical place, which rendered them at times virtually untraceable in their own right. This has now been conscientiously and properly corrected. Another most welcome improvement is the introduction of the double hyphen (==) to indicate a true hyphen and not simply a word-break where this occurs at the end of a line.

This is a neat device than the use of a repeated hyphen at the beginning of the following line. And not before time, as now many superior numbers to distinguish separate entries for identically spelled words, a well-established convention *Chambers* has been slow to adopt. It is a pity that the advantages of the International

Phonetic Alphabet as the only universally recognized pronunciation system have so far failed to commend its adoption likewise.

But back to the words. The additions to the lexicon, "several thousand" are told, represent a catholic policy and deft judgment as to staying-power, though the already passé *revue* and the dreadfully plodding *yomp* ("esp. mil. coll.") will not be with us for long, I venture. Sports, especially ones we're good at, get a fair showing, with *axel*, *lutz* and *salschow*. Currying favour, not to mention *windsurfing*, *paragliding*, *parasailing* and even *parascending* (do I hear *parasurfing*?) and John McEnroe may be pleased to find "the pits" (the absolute worst place, thing, etc possible) included, even if Nelson Piquet *et al* are less so. And we could surely have done without the *Harvey Smith salute*. Medical science and our increasing infatuation with bodily functions get a good look in, with *total allergy syndrome*, *toxic shock syndrome*, *slimmer's disease*, *allopaprotein*, *brown fat*, *mid-life crisis*, *rhytidectomy* (face-lift to you), *Montezuma's revenge*, *glycemia* and even *lumpectomy*; and many food items included for the first time (eg, *fu yung*, *vhidalo*, *taco*, *uhina*, *gundy*, *adzuki bean*, *kreplach*) testify perhaps to the steady crumbling of our traditional suspicion of exotic fare. We even have *Lymeswold* to tempt the world's palate in return (if the world can only get its tongue around the name).

Of the new foreign terms accepted by Chambers, Yiddish (*kveich*, *mesnaga*, *schorn*) and Australian (*chunder*, *ocker*, *Buckley's chance*) appear to contribute most, more one suspects for their picturesque appeal than for any other overriding reason. The gloriously grotesque *wey* (= U-turn as in *do a wey*) will prove invaluable to scrabblers (@ with cap.) unless the powers-that-be rule as they justifiably might that *Austr* = foreign.

It is tempting for a reviewer of a dictionary to dwell on the headword list in assessing its merits, since an analysis of its defining style is an infinitely more complex and demanding task in a limited space. The abiding impression one has with *Chambers* is of a down-to-earth, un-stuffy approach to the interpretation of meaning, traditional yet at the same time individualistic. It is interesting to note that the editor has been persuaded (by popular request, we may suppose) to reinstate a number of the "humorous" definitions dropped in the last edition (many were retained). So we have "picture-restorer" one who cleans and restores and sometimes "re-creates old pictures"; "peppermint" a festive or comic (esp. an office) poem or a play; and perhaps more famously "celar" or cake, long in shape but short in duration, with cream filling and chocolate or other icing. In the last of these the reinstated phrase "but short in duration" adds nothing to the definition—its humour is not even very funny—it merely signals to the reader that the lexicographer is human, with human weaknesses; and for that we should be thankful.

Among the new entries which serendipity may reveal to word-fiddlers, its meaning, "a confused outpouring of speech, most often occurring in cases of schizophrenia", falls quite to fit the bill. The phrase nevertheless serves admirably to suggest what *Chambers* offers.

Yorick Wilks

TERENCE MOORE and CHRISTINE CARLING
Understanding the Language: Towards a Post-Chomskyan Linguistics
225pp. Macmillan. £17.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0 333 27188 2

Noam Chomsky is a woman. All women are over-rated linguists therefore. Noam Chomsky is an over-rated linguist.

It is hard to pass through any educational system without being shown at some point that a true conclusion can follow correctly and inevitably from utterly false premises. Nonetheless, it is good to have a concrete and effective reminder of the possibility put before one from time to time. But it is a delicate matter to review a book with such a form, if one is to criticize the argument and premises without ever denying the conclusion which, in the present case, is rather subtler than the caricature above.

Chomsky can reasonably be said to have founded modern theoretical linguistics with the publication of *Syntactic Structures* in 1957. His theory, usually known as transformational-generative grammar, and universally abbreviated as TG, has metamorphosed more than once in the years since then: some of its absurdities have disappeared, and it has become generally more elevated in tone, as its claims have spread from being about language (English) to being about languages, actual and possible, and from being just a linguistic theory to being, at the same time, a theory of mind.

Despite the changes, the core of Chomsky's claims has not altered much: language, for him, and what makes it an independent area of study, is the possibility of generalizations about syntax. It is this claim that has grown to one about general human language and the relation of that to the genetic endowment of the brain at birth since. If the syntax of all languages is restricted in certain ways, it may well be reasonable to claim that that is because human brains were "just made that way".

He sought confirmation of the primacy of syntax in the ability of speakers to decide reliably what is and what is not a well-formed sentence of their language, and to do so on grounds that had nothing to do with the meaning of the sentence. That was the general and, importantly, of the immortal line "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously", which Chomsky hoped speakers would judge meaningless and that it was a correct sentence of English. Just to help him out, some poets actually incorporated the line into their work, so it now has a special and peculiar status, like the more agreeable lines of *Jabberwocky* before it.

Chomsky later withdrew the claim, largely because the native speakers proved so disappointing: they refused to make such judgments independently of what sense they could give the sentence offered them. When their judgments were confirmed, what Chomsky had done was to remove the

importance previously accorded to the native speaker! But he never withdrew his claims about the primacy of syntax, and what he called its *autonomy* from considerations of meaning and communication. He once admitted that, for him, it was a mere accident that sentences were used by people to communicate with one another.

Terence Moore and Christine Carling remind the reader of all these twists and turns, but do not fully bring out how shoddy they seem when judged against the standards of scientific explanation: no scientist could jettison data, informants, verification criteria and theories in turn, in the way Chomsky has, and survive. But linguistics is not a science, no matter how much Chomsky and his followers believe it is, yet since a principal theme of Moore and Carling is that the study of language should not be judged by the standards of science, they are not able to show how far Chomsky falls short of those standards.

This book has already been subjected to an extraordinary barrage of abuse from Chomsky's supporters in this country. It has been an odd spectacle, particularly as the anti-Chomsky arguments of the book are so out of date (nearly all of them were set out in print by others in the 1960s and 70s), and one might well wonder where all this energy is coming from. Again, Chomsky's ideas never had the following here they did in the United States. Yet now, when Chomsky has been accorded a just and fairly calm place in linguistics there, one in which his role is recognized and his formalisms adopted, but without any need to believe his peculiar claims and theories, suddenly he is acrimoniously attacked and equally fervently defended in Europe. This is not the progress of a science, but more like the way rock stars' reputations rise and fall independently on different continents or, to take a more serious metaphor, the skirmish here is reminiscent of those forgotten islands where hostilities go on only because both sides are unaware that a general ceasefire has been declared in capitals far away.

Chomsky's claim that there are "universals of syntax", discoverable in all languages, may or may not be true; the evidence is pretty thin, but it would be highly interesting if it were true. What cannot be questioned, though, is that Chomsky has laid down a formalism, and a way of describing the structure of languages, that cannot now be ignored: too much work has been done using them; Where Moore and Carling go badly wrong, whatever the broad truth of their conclusions, is to muddle matters of formalism with the issue of deduction. The central criticism in their book is that Chomsky offers only "deductively formulated theories" of language and, they write, "it is impractical and fruitless to introduce axiomatized theories" in the social sciences. Of course it is, but Chomsky never does. It is very hard to find an axiomatized theory (which is to say, a theory with all its deductions set out explicitly) in any science, but quite impossible in linguistics.

Art undergraders coming to the study of linguistics are often repelled by its formalisms. One tells them patiently that having a formalism does not make a subject mathematics, a subject they all fear, because there are no proofs or theorems in what they will go on to study. The formalism is merely descriptive; critics would say, merely decorative. This point is not pushed

home as hard as it should be by teachers of linguistics because they are normally arts men too, untouched by mathematics, and perhaps do not want to play down the skills they have acquired with such difficulty. So with Moore and Carling, I fear: they simply mistake the formalism of TG for a mathematics, or a fully deductive science, the very same error their Chomskyan critics fall into.

But if by their phrase "deductively formulated theories" they mean not TG itself but Chomsky's style of explanation, then again it is not deductive in any stronger sense than that in which behind any passage of discursive English prose there might lurk some interpretation of its sentences that is an explicit deduction. In such a sense of the phrase, *Ulysses*, for example, may have a deductively complete interpretation, one to be revealed by appropriate research. In short, the authors concede too much to Chomsky: that he is deductive; that he axiomatizes. Would that he did, say his sterner critics.

Another odd feature of the book may clarify this central point. In a note at the end of their prologue, the authors mention Artificial Intelligence (AI), a subject which seeks to model aspects of human reasoning on a computer. Its proponents, like our authors, wish to replace the Chomskyan view of language with one more based to meaning, reasoning and communication; it is no accident that Chomsky has always distanced himself from any approach to language based on computation. Our authors claim some common cause with AI, and the book is much decorated with phrases like "linguistic processes" and "data bases".

But a little discussion of, and reflection on, the nature of AI should have turned our authors back to their own main criticism of Chomsky. If (and it is a huge if) a language like English can, now or in the future, be analysed, generated, understood, if you wish, by a computer, (as AI workers hope), then the process of their programs use must at some level be deductive. There is no need to consider the programs at such a level: it is a commonplace that such programs often work by hit-and-miss methods, normally called *heuristics* precisely to distinguish them from the sure and complete methods of deduction. Nonetheless, it remains true that every computer program that works has an interpretation that is a red-blooded deduction, a fact (and it is a trivial fact) which follows simply from its being such a program, even though that may not be a revealing or insightful way to consider it, nor one the programmer himself had in mind.

The moral of all this is that Moore and Carling picked a bad argument to batter Chomsky with; however right their conclusions, they never actually offered a "deductive" theory, yet they may be no other kinds of theory one can have, or, at least aim for, if one wants to do science, or to program a computer, or to build a machine, or to do any of the neighbouring subjects that Moore and Carling appear of when it suits them, but whose details they wholly ignore, offers just such theories.

Under all the muddle in the book one very good instinct about where to look for insight into what language is and how it works. Moore and Carling also write very well, as small thing in a subject dominated by a man who writes atrociously.

Northern outposts

Simon Digby

MARY SHEPHERD SLUSSER
Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley
Two volumes: 491pp. Princeton University Press. £91.80.
0 691 03128 2

Between the high Himalayas and the outer ranges, between Gligit in the north-west and the eastern frontier of Nepal, there are only two level, cultivable areas which have been able to sustain, through millennia, cultural traditions comparable in richness to the regional cultures of the Indo-Gangetic valleys of Kashmir and of Kathmandu, with the second of which Mary Shepherd Slusser is concerned. By comparison with the broad kingdoms of the plains these valleys are of small extent; the Vale of Kashmir is approximately eighty-four miles long, and twenty to twenty-five wide, the Kathmandu valley, some fifteen miles long and about twelve miles across at its widest.

These two valleys were the last comfortable staging-posts on difficult routes to Sikkim or Tibet, China or Central Asia and both had developed powerful local idioms of Buddhist and Brahmanical culture by the second half of the first millennium AD. In the Kathmandu valley many Sanskrit inscriptions survive. Mary Shepherd Slusser records more of these than any previous writer in English—while in Kashmir a chronicle tradition developed unequalled in South Asia. By the thirteenth century Kashmiri culture somehow ran out of steam or, as is evidenced by the rapid decay of its sculptural tradition there.

In the last few centuries the lot of the inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley appears to have been more fortunate than that of the Kashmiris, who have endured hundreds of years of "down-country" colonialist rule. There, there was no Kalhana, whose *Rajatarangini* provided us with much evidence of small-scale violence, torture and massacre in Kashmir) to tell of the misadventures of a ruler who murdered his grandsons when they attained the age of majority, though Dr Slusser's chapter on "Mothers and

Grandmothers: the encompassing host" mentions that these female deities were "propitiated with blood and alcohol". In the Kathmandu valley three kingdoms existed for centuries within two hours' walk of one another. The destruction of the great Buddhist monasteries of Eastern India and of the Sena kingdom of Bengal, which were overrun by Muslim invaders, brought an influx of refugees to Nepal; and Nepali sculpture and illustrated manuscripts from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century are of exceptional vigour. New influences continued to be absorbed from the cultural centres of the Indian plains down to the nineteenth century; and in some instances transmitted onwards to Tibet and metropolitan China.

The relative stability of this advantageous place society was disturbed in the mid-eighteenth century when Prithvinarayan Shah, Rajput, power-holder of Gorkha, a hilltop fortress town ravines away from the Kathmandu valley, went down to Benares, always a centre of intellectual influence on Nepal, where he discovered the advantages of the musket. It took him twenty-five years to subdue the three kings of the Kathmandu valley, after which the "Gorkhas" established a military empire extending to the present territorial frontiers of Nepal.

The Gorkhas were on a collision course with the East India Company, like such "country powers" as Nepal, Sultan, the Marathas and the Sikhs. But the Company's officers did not understand the difficulties of Himalayan warfare, and early punitive expeditions came to grief, finally that, able commander, Sir David Ochterlony, brought the Gorkhas to a satisfactory treaty settlement of the frontiers of the Nepal Terai (low-country). After this, like the courts of Lucknow, Delhi, Poona, and Hyderabad, the court of Kathmandu had its British "Resident". Nepal's independence was threatened, but the balance was altered by the timely arrival of the Gurkha commander-in-chief, Jang Bahadur, with a contingent of 9,000 men to help the British suppress the Indian insurrection of 1857. This privileges maintained after he ensured the survival of an independent kingdom of Nepal with its capital at Kathmandu.

One consequence of this privileged relationship was that European writers admitted to Nepal with great

reluctance, and "Orientalists" had little hope of pursuing their studies there. Brian Houghton Hodgson, the East India Company's Assistant Resident and then Resident at Kathmandu from 1820 to 1844, was a keen Sanskritist and a collector of information in the best tradition of his British Indian contemporaries, but among his numerous learned publications there was no overall survey of the history and civilization of the Kathmandu valley. At the end of the nineteenth century the French orientalist Silvain Lévy published a three-volume study, but he was not permitted to stay long in the country.

Changes took place only after the successful coup which overthrew the Rana mayors of the palace in 1950. Tourists then arrived in increasing numbers on short-term visas, and some Western research students were permitted to stay, study and take photographs. Nepal, or rather the Kathmandu valley, was stripped of most of its small and portable works of art by Western tourists and Indian art-dealers, and these have subsequently furnished part of the basis for a chronology of Nepalese art.

Like earlier recorders of inaccessible societies Slusser was at hand at a critical time with appropriate training and resources. Trained as an archaeologist and anthropologist, and married to an American official stationed in Nepal, she had the opportunity of six years' residence between 1965 and 1971, as well as support from the Smithsonian and the JDR III Fund, which was spent on Hindu Nepal research assistants, "a young draftsman", field-work, a photographic archive and a search for parallels to Nepalese monuments in the architecture of the eastern Indian plains.

The pace of change in the Kathmandu valley is now alarming, and it is fortunate indeed that Slusser was there to record so much before it disappeared or irrevocably altered. The results of her labours are two handsome quarto volumes of majestic proportions, more pages of closely printed double columns and more illustrations than there are square miles in the territory surveyed. They fill a gap in the British Indian gazetteer tradition, and will be indispensable to those who may want to write on any aspect of the history and society of the Kathmandu valley.

Getting our deserts

Steven Collins

CHARLES F. KEYES and E. VALENTINE DANIEL (Editors)
Karma: An anthropological inquiry
313pp. University of California Press. £23.50.
0 520 04429 0

The Indian notion of *karma* claims that what one does and will experience in this life and in future lives is a result of one's own past and present actions (including those in past lives). Max Weber thought that this represented "the most consistent theology ever produced by history"; and many theologians and philosophers have followed him in assuming that the Indian response to ethical problems, notably that of evil and the lack of fit between destiny and merit, follows the same model. Equally, Weber thought that the fatalism about the present apparently inherent in the idea, and the next-worldly orientation of hopes for improvement in one's lot, were a crucial factor in preventing the growth in India of the voluntarist and thus worldly social and economic attitudes necessary for the rise of capitalism; and again many sociologists, development economists and others have followed Weber in seeing belief in *karma* as a decisive obstacle to the "spirit of modernity".

In a splendidly succinct and clear précis of "Karma in Popular Hinduism" in this volume, L. Babb shows that it is not that "theories such as [these] are necessarily wrong; but that they are really little more than conjectures. It might or might not be true that a belief in karma influences behaviour in the ways these theories suggest—or, for that matter, in quite different ways. But what must be stressed is that this is an empirical question." *Karma: An anthropological inquiry* will help us greatly to achieve a realistic grasp of Indian culture, of the kind we need if we are to begin to answer such questions as Weber asked. His work—given the material available to him—was a masterpiece of accurate and scholarly insight. But we know more now, and must try to do better.

The book is the second volume of a projected trilogy. The first, edited by Wendy O'Flaherty, *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (reviewed in the TLS, September 24, 1981), showed how the idea of *karma*, even in the traditions of the educated élite, has been expressed in a great many (not always consistent) ways, and how it has always co-existed with many other (not always compatible) explanatory models. The third volume will deal with these ideas in the post-classical literature. The present work concerns *karma* in popular Indian literature and practice. All the writers are anthropologists by training, and their ethnographic material is presented for the most part in a clear, persuasive and illuminating way. A whole range of other explanatory notions and practices are brought in, which coexist with and sometimes replace the idea(s) of *karma*. God's "headwriting", in which one's destiny is written on one's forehead at birth; divination and astrology; one's "apportioned lot" (*bhāgya*); curses or vows as attempts to change or avoid *karma*; a great many notions of shared, transferred, inherited, or, in other ways collective, karmic merit and

responsibility (especially within families); and we see the role of *karma* (or lack of it) in Buddhist Tibet and Thailand, and in partly-Hinduized Bali.

All of these, in various ways and to various degrees, seem to enmesh or contradict the stricter, philosophical idea of an individual's own inevitable karmic responsibility for his lot and destiny. It is often difficult to know, as S. Wadley points out in her essay on religious vows (*vrats*), whether one should see these other kinds of explanation as contradicting or counteracting *karma*—as some clearly seem to do—or whether they might merely depict the particular means by which one's *karma* is brought to fruition. This ambiguity is perhaps not sufficiently attended to in much of the book.

One particularly interesting conjunction of ideas, addressed here notably by S. and E. V. Daniel, is that between *karma* and different kinds of traditional or folkloric medicine. *Karma* here is mixed with ideas of "humours", bodily "psychobiological qualities" (Sanskrit *gunas*, Tamil *kammis*), and the like, and, as C. F. Keyes's introduction has it, in this guise appears to Indian not only as "an abstract set of ideas to use in orienting themselves to their actions, but [also as] assumptions about concrete qualities that adhere to persons". (This idea is also basic to Jaina philosophy.) Since these medical concepts are used also in Indian technical psychology and philosophy, there is much room for comparative investigation of the way in which Indian notions of physical and psycho-spiritual aetiology and treatment compare and contrast with our own about the relation between biological medicine, physiologically based psychology and psychiatry, and purely conceptual, socio-cultural forms of analysis and therapy.

A number of the contributors discuss the problem of free-will and determinism. Some assume *karma* to be wholly deterministic, and comment on apparent departures from it; others argue that the theory itself allows for interpretation in terms both of free-will and determinism. Babb is surely right to suggest that although this ambivalence might be a disadvantage conceptually (to philosophers), it is a positive advantage psychologically and culturally (to people in their day-to-day lives). The theory manages to acknowledge the unpredictability of destiny, and the consequent need we all have at times for fatalistic resignation to "what happens", as well as giving room for some sense of human responsibility and freedom, both retrospective and prospective.

It is a pity that more attention is not paid—Babb's article apart—to the wider issues I have already mentioned. Keyes's introduction is clear and helpful, particularly on the differences between the use of *karma* in the popular practices of Hinduism and that of Buddhism; and on Weber's claim that *karma* is the perfect logical solution to the theory's at best an introduction. It concentrates mainly on a basic delineation of the problems and on the contributions to the volume. E. V. Daniel's conclusion is particularly disappointing: a fascinating and real world seems to get lost in a haze of currently fashionable anthropological jargon. But overall the book is an excellent contribution to the subject.

Disreputable reading: old . . .

Patricia Craig

DORNFORD YATES

Blind Corner
Introduced by Tom Sharpe
163pp. 0 460 02248 2

SAPPER

Bulldog Drummond
Introduced by Richard Osborne
209pp. 0 460 02244 X

JOHN BUCHAN

Castle Gay
Introduced by David Daniell
228pp. 0 460 02242 3

EDGAR WALLACE

The Mind of Mr. J. G. Reeder
Introduced by Julian Symons
151pp. 0 460 02256 3
Dent. Paperback, £2.50 each.

In *Bestseller* (1972) Claud Cockburn mentions the profound impression made on him by John Buchan's novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, which he read when he was eleven; most people, I think, would agree that this is the age at which the merits of Buchan, like those of the other writers now reappearing under Dent's new "Classic Thrillers" imprint, can be most thoroughly savoured. Readers exposed to the work of such authors at the appropriate age, however, are apt to remain faithful for life. One way to define the classic thriller of the 1920s is to call it a book which can hold an unaccountable attraction for people whom you might expect it to repel.

It is odd, for instance, to find Cyril Connolly including himself among the admirers of Dorndford Yates, a band about whom he expresses the opinion, "We appreciate fine writing when we come across it, and a wit that is ageless united to a courtesy that is extinct." Even Tom Sharpe, who writes the introduction to the new edition of *Blind Corner* (1972), is careful to dissociate himself from this bare-faced piece of hyperbole. On the evidence of the novel it's easy to see why. *Blind Corner*, in relation to which a number of readers would seem to have a blind spot, displays nothing of the bithness or insouciance we have come to associate with the era. It is written in a style in which Richard Osborne, not normally unperceptive about degrees of elegance, finds echoes of the Bible and Bunyan. It made me think of a rather dim but conscientious schoolboy trying to turn out a piece of work to please his form master. "That the thieves were drawing no water delighted us all, for nothing could have

shown us more plainly how much they were underrating the activity of the springs. Moreover, by their failure to bail, they were throwing away the previous fruit of our labour, and, of their ignorance, letting slip an invaluable advantage." So it goes on.

Blind Corner succeeds in converting a treasure hunt into an exercise in tedium. Its dullness has a good deal to do with the turgid prose; but the plot, for all its apparent colour and exhilaration - fatelul dog-collars, frantic car chases, castles in Carinthia and determined wrongdoers - is actually pretty unexciting too. What do we have? Three young men, and their servants, groping about in an eighty-foot well, or foiled up uncomfortably in an oubliette. You know that in every encounter with the criminal contingent the upstanding young Englishmen will come off best. The hero's invincibility, a built-in feature of the genre, is less irritating in a work like "Sapper's" *Bulldog Drummond* where it's possible to relish the increasing absurdity of the predicaments devised for him. The set-piece emergencies of Dorndford Yates, on the other hand, induce nothing but ennui.

In *Bulldog Drummond* (1920) a number of vile foreigners are planning to bring England to her knees. Captain Hugh Drummond, DSO, MC is the person to stop them. Drummond is the archetypal young man at a loose end whom exorbitant adventures are about to overtake. At a certain house in Godalming, Surrey, he comes face to face, in the course of his earliest exploit, with a hooded cobra, a device on the stairs for breaking the neck, an unfriendly young gorilla answering to the name of Sambo, an ill-treated American, a striking variety of conspirators, a liquid substance causing instant decomposition, a suave female malefactor and an intrepid *ingénue*. All these he handles in accordance with the rules of popular fiction. He's not at a loss, either, if he wakes in the night to find a small native, complete with blowpipe and poisoned darts, taking aim at him from the top of his wardrobe. What action does the sportsman and gentleman take in retaliation? He overturns native, wardrobe and all.

All this makes fairly low-grade entertainment which falls pretty quickly, at least for those who come to the stories at the wrong age. Without the element of nostalgia to deflect criticism, you are likely to remain unimpressed by the central flatness, rather than the artificial excitement that surrounds it. Truly, there is a limit to the enjoyment to be got from such knockabout fun. As far as literary merit is concerned, there is really very little to choose between *Bulldog*

Drummond and Rockfist Rogan, though one was created ostensibly for adults and the other for schoolboys. Those who require a degree of felicity from their disreputable reading would do well to stick with Buchan, the most plausible and mettlesome of the quartet revived by Dent. *Castle Gay* (1930) deals with the further adventures of Dickson McCunn, Buchan's ex-grocer fired by the spirit of romance, and two of the Gorbals Die-Hards who first appeared in the engaging *Huntingtower* (1922).

These, on a walking holiday in the Galloway hills, quickly find themselves in the thick of a frolicsome intrigue involving quite a few obsessional foreigners, some with black beads and some with red. Evasionist monarchists and Evasionist republicans are converging, separately, on the fortified home of a Scottish newspaper magnate on whom they all have devious designs. Their effete quarry, as it happens, is away from home, having been abducted in error from a railway station. Some time later he is rescued by one of the ex-Die-Hards, now a Cambridge undergraduate, and taken on a long tramp in bad weather, in the course of which he is obliged to put on an inn-keeper's trousers and a cheap tweed jacket. The experience makes a man of him.

A lot of crawling about in bracken and planning of strategies get taken care of. Among Buchan's strengths is a feeling for the more pungent aspects of the countryside he depicts, as well as the effortless inventiveness and crispness he brings to the whole undertaking (a few passages of overwriting apart).

To go on from *Castle Gay* to *The Mind of Mr. J. G. Reeder* is to proceed from the fertile to the facile. This collection of stories, first published in 1927, gets its strongest effects from the discrepancy between its hero's appearance - prim and unpossessing - and the quality of his mind: preternaturally acute. (The deceptive exterior is a common ingredient of a certain type of light fiction: it forms, we may remember, the basis of Miss Marple's characterization too.) Mr Reeder is a subordinate of the Public Prosecutor. He owes his high position in the office to his ability to duplicate the thought-processes of the average ill-doer. "I have the mind of a criminal", he sighs; this is the stories' most-very-vivid refrain.

Mr Reeder, whose dapper umbrella conceals a sharp steel blade, is for ever discomfiting the rogues of the underworld who persist in under-rating their antagonist's wits. A positive bevy of discharged convicts is out to get him (or so it appears). Mr Reeder apologetically makes asses of them all; but this isn't, in fact, a very startling

transformation. His activities are set out in a banal and old-fashioned way. A certain efficiency of construction is noticeable in one or two of the episodes, it's true, but this isn't sufficient to offset the dismal smartness they offer in place of wit. Even addicts, I imagine, will find it difficult to wallow in this particular Wallace.

All four titles come furnished with eloquent introductions which treat seriously, but not too seriously, the novels' claim to special assessment. This is no more than their due, the argument might go, because of the widespread affection they once commanded. Moreover, a part at least of their present value resides in aspects

of the narratives their authors never dreamed of considering. From them, willy-nilly, we learn a great deal about the state of mind of a section of the reading public, including all the prejudices it thoughtlessly nourished. (These, though it would be tedious to enumerate, come under scrutiny in a good variety of literary studies, of which Colin Watson's *Shobbery with Violence*, 1971, is an outstanding example.) The new audience for these old stories, then, will probably include some literary historians and social critics, as well as omnivorous child readers, the backward-looking and the curious. It should be enough to make the series a success.

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

M. M. Kaye

Death in Zanzibar

270pp. Allen Lane. £6.95.
0 7139 1521 8

Although written before the author's romantic historical novel *Trade Wind*, *Death in Zanzibar* is a kind of sequel to it, in that it treats of the same family, a couple of generations on, and has the same setting: "Kivulimi", the mysterious "House of Shade", set on all too romantic Zanzibar. The heroine, young Dany Ashton, comes out to visit her mother and step-father at "Kivulimi", accompanied by a crowd of eccentrics, soon to become suspects as the bodies multiply. It's an undemanding, reasonably pleasant narration which combines romance and detection rather in the manner of the late, great George Heyer. Unfortunately, it lacks both her skill in devising a plot and her effortless charm.

ROBERT TIME

Uneasy Lies the Head

188pp. Collins. £6.75.
0 00231927 6

Some historians believe that Jack the Ripper was Eddy Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of the future Edward VII. And now, when a modern admiral of the Victorian murderer is leaving London prostitutes looking like jigsaw puzzles, the trail once again leads to Buckingham Palace, this time straight to the recently crowned King George VII: young, personable and suspiciously unmarried. But the police in charge of the case - amiable Smudge Huddleston, on the verge of retirement, and Tony Pidgeon, young and insecure - aren't the people to let royal blood come between them and their suspect's collar. Clever, enormously witty and very well put together, but let down by a slack and careless conclusion.

CLARE CURZON

I Give You Five Days

191pp. Collins. £6.75.
0 00231375 8

Gillian Morton-Hayes, the beautiful teenage daughter of a successful barrister, is found strangled in a park in a Thames Valley town. As Detective Superintendent Mike Yeading probes into the crime, the hidden secrets of the other members of the family gradually emerge into the light. The tensions of family life are well caught, and actions and attitudes are analysed with deft skill. But the ending is a slight let-down.

MARIAN BARSON

A Pool for Murder

176pp. Collins. £6.30.
0 00231367 7

The members of the eccentric Creighleigh family are gathered to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the head of their house, the rich and most eccentric, Wilmer Creighleigh. A classic situation, well exploited by Marian Barson in this light, amusing comedy in which a murder has been skilfully whittled.

JESSICA MANN

No Man's Island

190pp. Macmillan. £6.50.
0 333 34773 0

Tamara Hoyland, who appeared in Jessica Mann's last thriller, *Pinet Sires*, has been recruited by an anonymous security agency and sent to Forway, a fictional island in the Atlantic, beyond Ireland and the Scillies. Though ostensibly British, it is now being claimed - since oil has been found in its waters - by France, Britain and Ireland. Forway is imaginatively portrayed, and the book is put together and written with neatness and elegance, even if Tamara herself seems rather too good to be true.

NICOLAS FREELING

The Back of the North Wind

218pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
0 434 27188 8

Castang, Nicolas Freeling's French policeman, is up to his ears in work: there's a cannibalized corpse to investigate, a number of unexplained deaths which appear to link up with a juvenile racket, and, finally, a right wing politician who has been thrown out of office is subtly touting for supporters in the quickly individual as manner in which he manages to smuggle a good deal more into the crime novel than the genre is usually accustomed to hold.

JONATHAN WALIN

Day of Wrath

213pp. Collins. £6.75.
0 00231365 0

Harry Stoner, Cincinnati private detective, is asked to trace a teenage girl who has run away from home. He does so, uncovering in the process some very odd corners of Cincinnati life. This is undoubtedly the author's best Harry Stoner book so far. It is a powerful, well-plotted story, full of carefully observed detail, and, in the end, extremely depressing. No stain of white lightens the dark grey and blacks which set the novel's tone.

MICHAEL Z. LEWIN

Hard Line

252pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0 333 34825 7

Michael Lewin, baseball columnist of the *Somerset Standard*, has abandoned his usual hero - Albert Samson, the Indianapolis private eye - for the eccentric, middle-aged, far from successful Leroy Powder, head of the Indianapolis Police Department's Missing Persons Bureau. Powder's about the only person who gets anything done in this department; he doesn't track down any missing persons, but he solves a murder, cleans up a few burglaries, pins a rap on his delinquent son, and rehabilitates the beautiful, Sergeant Caroline Fleetwood, assigned to his Bureau in a wheelchair while recovering from wounds sustained in the course of duty. Powder's grouchy, manner doesn't succeed in concealing his marvellous sense of humour. Lewin's *Hard Line* is a lively, original book, with enough humour to fill a roomful of police blotchers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapters and their titles

David Shaw

CLIVE HURST (Compiler)

Catalogue of the Wren Library of Lincoln Cathedral: Books printed before 1801
599pp. Cambridge University Press.
£100
0 521 23480 8

The cathedrals for centuries provided a sort of private public library service for their locality. In the Middle Ages, when libraries hardly existed outside the cathedrals and similar collegiate

manuscripts, a habit of making manuscripts available to visiting scholars was established which persists to the present day. The introduction of printed books no doubt reduced the importance of the ecclesiastical collections, which were in any case soon to be disrupted by the suppression of the monastic chapters during the Reformation. Few survived this period intact and many today own very few of their pre-Reformation books. After the Reformation, chapters did not always put much effort into rebuilding their collections and the Civil War often undid such work as had been done. The re-establishment of the Church of England at the Restoration seems by contrast to have unleashed considerable energies in many cathedrals for library building and book collecting as part of the wider task of reimposing the patterns of cathedral life and worship.

At Lincoln, what remained after the Reformation was further reduced by a fire in 1609, though there is some evidence of acquisition in the period up to the Civil War. The new Dean appointed at the Restoration, Michael Honywood (born 1597), had been in exile in the Low Countries since 1642. He brought back with him a considerable personal library which he later bequeathed to his cathedral, having already paid for the construction (by Sir Christopher Wren) of a new library building. A photograph of the interior of the Wren Library is placed as a frontispiece to Clive Hurst's *Catalogue*. (Sadly, its publication has coincided with an announcement that the Library must be closed for extensive repairs because of damage by death-watch beetle.)

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in many cathedral libraries saw a steady policy of acquisition by purchase, gift and bequest and the continuing practice of making the collections available to suitable readers in the community outside the chapter. By the mid-nineteenth century, the inherited stock of the cathedral libraries must have become rather outdated for current needs. The larger or more active cathedrals kept up their momentum by purchasing works of current scholarship, especially in history and theology (and occasionally selling earlier material to finance new developments), and by receiving the sometimes very considerable private libraries of their deceased prebends - which often contained large quantities of very material that was beginning to seem antiquated on their own shelves. Lincoln Cathedral's was one of the libraries which increased and reorganized its collections in this period.

The twentieth century has brought about a reevaluation of the cathedrals' older collections, partly as historical and literary-historical studies have developed in the universities, but especially as bibliography has emerged as an independent academic discipline encompassing the history of the book (manuscript and printed), textual criticism of early printed texts and the history of libraries themselves. The cathedral libraries now find themselves back in the role of custodians of source material for scholars all over the English-speaking world and beyond. Interest was focused at first on incunables and early sixteenth-century printing, an interest inherited from nineteenth-century Didsneque scholarship. The *Lincoln Catalogue* now over one hundred incunables, a thoroughly respectable total.

The cathedrals contributed to the first edition of the *Bibliographical Society's Short-title catalogue of books*

printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English books printed abroad 1475-1600. The second edition (Volume Two 1976, Volume One expected in 1985) of its astonishing quantity of additional material has drawn on discoveries made in the cathedrals catalogued more recently. The revision of Wing's *STC of English books* 1641-1700 is likewise benefiting from the post-war renewal of cataloguing activity in the English cathedrals. The *ESTC (Eighteenth-century English Short-title Catalogue)* project at the British Library is likely to find the cathedrals more useful still, particularly for local imprints.

All of which imposes further burdens on hard-worked canon librarians. Some will have part-time or voluntary professional help. In a few cases, there will be full-time staff with secretarial help. Several universities have managed in recent years to provide rare books staff for their cathedral library. Lincoln has received some help from both Nottingham and Loughborough. There is a proposal in the work (originally put forward by the Bibliographical Society) for a system of centrally sponsored but privately financed help for the smaller cathedrals which lack possibilities of local help of the appropriate sort.

The British Library has used its grant-awarding powers to give a major push towards the completion of a national catalogue of the resources of the cathedral libraries. Lincoln was the first cathedral to benefit and Hurst's *Catalogue* is the visible, public evidence of that help. Canterbury next and then Durham have received grants for cataloguing their older collections, and other cathedrals such as Salisbury and York have benefited indirectly through British Library grants to the Bibliographical Society. The cases of Lincoln and Canterbury show how individual enthusiasms can be as decisive now as was the case with Restoration deans and canons. At both cathedrals the British Library grants were obtained through the initiative of Victor de Waal, who was Chancellor at Lincoln and is now Dean at Canterbury.

A further dimension is the national union catalogue of pre-1700 books in English and Welsh cathedrals started nearly forty years ago by Miss Hands on behalf of the Bibliographical Society. After her death, the work has been taken up again under British Library patronage and is now being completed at Canterbury, where the University Library has offered a home for the editorial phase of the project. Recent cataloguing work at Durham, Canterbury and York has produced an avalanche of new material to be incorporated into the union catalogue. The present *Lincoln Catalogue* will be of immediate benefit to the editors, since it provides verifications of Miss Hands's work, and more importantly material which has come to light since she worked at Lincoln in 1944-46. Those familiar with the cathedral library will know the frequency with which "new" material turns up unexpectedly in odd corners.

Catalogues of early printed material are always welcome to specialists. Even the bad ones (and this one is not) are likely to offer something to get excited about: if the collection is previously little known, the statistics of survival of early printed books show that whereas folio editions of the Church Fathers will turn up in quantities in scholarly libraries, an eight-page controversial pamphlet might survive in a single copy in some library where it is effectively lost if there is no publicly available catalogue. In the nature of modern research, the ephemeral and the controversial are likely to be of more importance than yet another copy of a standard work.

The *Lincoln Catalogue* is certainly not lacking in such material. Its incunables include the standard reference works: a liturgical text, *Ordo ad catechizandos benedicandos*, printed in Cologne in the 1490s; and a new edition of a legal text, Alexander Tartagni de Imola's *Apolline super prima parte Digesti noui* (Venice: Georgius Argyrenus, 1492). The concordances at the end of the *Catalogue* list three pre-1641 English books not known to the second edition

of *STC* and over a hundred not known to Wing for the period 1641-1700. In many cases these are pamphlets known in other editions but the existence of a further edition is potentially significant for a study of the diffusion of the work in question. Research on the Civil War pamphlet material in the cathedrals together with the better-known collections at the British Library would undoubtedly uncover a great deal of new information on the publication of this material ("hidden" page-for-page reprints, for example) which could offer new insights into the demand for controversial pamphlets and the currency of sectarian opinion.

For the bibliography of Continental printed material, the *Lincoln Catalogue* offers much of value, due in part to Dean Dean Honywood's activities in exile in Holland. The entry for Erasmus, for example, is teeming with Continental editions of the early sixteenth century. Country and institutional headings (France: Paris; Wittenberg University) have small groups of pamphlet material of interest to cultural historians. There is a surprising number of works in Dutch. On the other hand, there is noticeably less vernacular literature (English or foreign) than in some cathedrals and less mathematics, science or medicine than, for example, at Canterbury. That said, there is still a wide variety of material available for study at Lincoln, as in the cathedrals at large.

The *Lincoln Catalogue* is a handsome volume, nearly 600 pages long, two columns to the page, the pages being slightly larger than A4 size and the text well spaced and uncramped. The thought is inescapable that this is too good. How much of the substantial purchase price could have been saved by the more modest dimensions? There might then have

Refuge of the Reformation

I. D. McFarlane

MIRIAM USHER CHRISMAN

Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599

401pp. Yale University Press. £25.
0 300 02530 0

Bibliography of Strasbourg Imprints, 1480-1599
418pp. Yale University Press. £27.50.
0 300 02891 1

Sixteen years ago, Miriam Usher Chrisman published her *Strasbourg and the Reform*; since then, she has become increasingly aware of the need to explore further the cultural *casse de résonance* in which the Reformation took place in that city. Inspired by the example of Henri-Jean Martin's work on Parisian books during the seventeenth century, she has taken the local book-trade as a guide into Strasbourg's cultural activity; her *Bibliography of Strasbourg Imprints, 1480-1599* provides the infrastructure for *Lay Culture, Learned Culture*, which contains an appendix on data collection and the data computer method used.

The *Bibliography* is broken down into subdivisions that seem generally satisfactory (not all books can be tidily pigeon-holed), though one may be surprised to find *Alcibi* under "intra-protestant controversy". Andreas Capellanus' dialogues on Love described as "a chivalric tale" or Mantuan's eclogues as "epic". Every volume listed by specialists in the field (Schmitt, Ritter, Griener, Bentzing, etc.) finds its niche, and a most comprehensive short-title catalogue is now available to the *settimista*, though claims to include "all" books printed at Strasbourg may be a trifle bold. The reader will find a great deal of value here, and the placing of imprints in chronological order according to subject is particularly helpful. As Professor Chrisman points out in the preface, a "modern" ordering of these books would have obscured the way in which they have been used by the past. There are inevitably a few points which the reader

will find room for an index of printers and publishers, for notes on provenances other than Dean Honywood and for a fuller essay on the history of the library.

The entries are of the usual short-title catalogue form: heading, longish short-title, imprint, format and pagination, bibliographical references and occasional notes. The *Catalogue* seems rather deficient or inconsistent in its use of cross-references for alternative forms of name or for title references for anonymous works listed under form headings, for example. This is particularly the case with the pamphlet material discussed above. Cross-references for editors and translators seem to be especially haphazard. The concordances of *STC*, Wing, Goff and Adams numbers are very welcome.

Beyond the question of the price of the *Catalogue*, there lurks the question of whether it was really necessary to publish it at all. The pre-1701 material is to appear in the Bibliographical Society's Cathedral Libraries Catalogue, where its value will be considerably enhanced by the complementary holdings of the other English and Welsh cathedrals. The eighteenth-century English material will be gathered in by the *ESTC* project in the next few years. This leaves only the eighteenth-century Continental books to justify this volume in the medium term, but it is precisely in this area that the *Catalogue* is weakest: perhaps as little as three per cent of the 8,000 or so entries are of eighteenth-century foreign material.

Let it seem criminal folly to give academic publishers excuses for not publishing scholarly reference works, I should explain that it is by no means

might carp at: a single standardized form for each author's name would have made for easier reference, and one or two sources of confusion might have been avoided; authors appearing under two separate headings (e.g. Sebizio/Sebitius), conflated authors (Ausonius, Jacob Mycellus, and apparently Conrad and Cyrillus); lack of consistency in dealing with pseudonyms (Corricher/Pegues); Chytracus listed also under Chytracus; no vernacular name for Lusitani; Arnaut, a mixture of Latin and English (Horace/Fleccus); Georgius Buchanan, who is also listed under John Buchanan); unorthodox forms of names (Boulay, Fèvre d'Étaples); and *Gratorolo* is omitted from the Index, though his works are listed. Perhaps roping in the family for this time-consuming and tedious labour was not always for the best. Nevertheless, in spite of blemishes, scholars will be grateful to have a handy *STC* of this nature, which will save hours of further search; and we must not forget that the volume is a spin-off from the study project.

Lay Culture, Learned Culture brings out the considerable gap that existed between lay and humanist cultures. The phenomenon is of course not unknown in other countries affected by Renaissance humanism; but the detail with which this matter is analysed constitutes one of the chief merits of this interesting work. After a preliminary chapter on the book and printing trades, Chrisman divides up her century into four main periods: clerical dominance (1480-1520); new currents - religious, scientific, educational (1515-65); the vernacular interim (1549-70); the institutionalization of religion, science and learning. Within these periods, the statistical analyses (all reproduced in tabular form) reveal that the peaks and hollows of a particular discipline have their own rhythms, and though 1520 is clearly a key date, we are shown that, in terms of printing, theological, humanist and scientific concerns all peaked at slightly different moments about that time. The sharp and actively lengthy interludes of vernacular dominance is also well noted. Among other things, Chrisman shows how religious controversy was normally confined to learned circles, though specific topics surfaced in the

quality of Clive Hurst's work which disquiets me: nor Lincoln's need for a catalogue for its own use but rather the strategy of publishing this particular *Catalogue* at this moment. Scholars needing access to rare books do not on the whole want to search for their material in a long series of individual catalogues with all the attendant problems of obtaining an overall picture of a particular field. The strategy to be encouraged is that of the union catalogue like Adams, which grouped all the sixteenth-century foreign books in Catalogues of the *STC*, Wing and *ESTC* catalogues of English books. As D. F. McKenzie pointed out in his *TLS* review (December 17, 1982) of Volume Two of the second edition of Wing, the days of the large and expensive book-form catalogue are more or less numbered for collections of this type. As with the *ESTC* project at the British Library, we should now be thinking in the first instance of storing our catalogue data on open-ended computer databases from which microform or traditional catalogues can be derived in full or selectively. The Cathedral Libraries Catalogue, like the Canterbury Cathedral catalogue, is of this sort. The data for both of them will be available for incorporation into a future database of early printed books on a national scale. Such a database does not yet exist, but we ought to be planning now to get our raw material into a suitable form for it. It would be a (relatively) simple matter to devise a rolling programme of incorporation of material from such published and unpublished catalogues, using on-line data-entry, search and editing techniques. We have the technology; we have much of the raw data; what is now needed is some enlightened official patronage. It is a job which would only need doing once.

vernacular, with the emphasis shifting from dogma to behaviour; salvation by faith, predestination, the Eucharist, all these, important in a climate favouring conversion, were given a wider airing. In the field of medicine, significant advances are noted, though it might have been interesting to compare these findings with what was going on in neighbouring countries affected by humanism. Strasbourg does not, after all, produce many original minds, and a great number of humanists who graced the city while were recruited from elsewhere and left in due course for other pastures; humanist poetry does not appear to flourish all that much locally, nor indeed does vernacular verse. Nevertheless Johann Sturm's role in persuading his contemporaries to interest themselves in developments beyond the city bore fruit; his Gymnasium and the Academy that completed its pioneering work provided the framework that would allow humanist education to shape the minds of a wider section of the community than in time past, but this progress was not exactly continuous.

Dr Chrisman has worthwhile things to say on the social background of the theologians, printers and humanists, on the directions taken by important printers, on the impact made at crucial moments by political and religious considerations. Of course, Strasbourg was very much of a crossroads, in no sense a cultural enclave. If one looks at the *Bibliography* one will be surprised to see that, though Mantuan and Cicero have a massive presence, there is only one printing (1555) of Virgil after 1520, and very few editions of Ovid (nine, of which three concern the *Metamorphoses*). Martial is printed only twice (1515 and 1598). Given the importance of these writers in the educational schemes of the Renaissance, editions must have been obtained from elsewhere; and one might ask how many other authors were similarly treated. An exact answer is impossible, but one would like to know more about the sources of humanist culture that were normally imported for local consumption. Nevertheless, the *settimista* will find much to interest him; these well-documented pages, a rather fuller index would, I think, have made their rich findings more accessible.